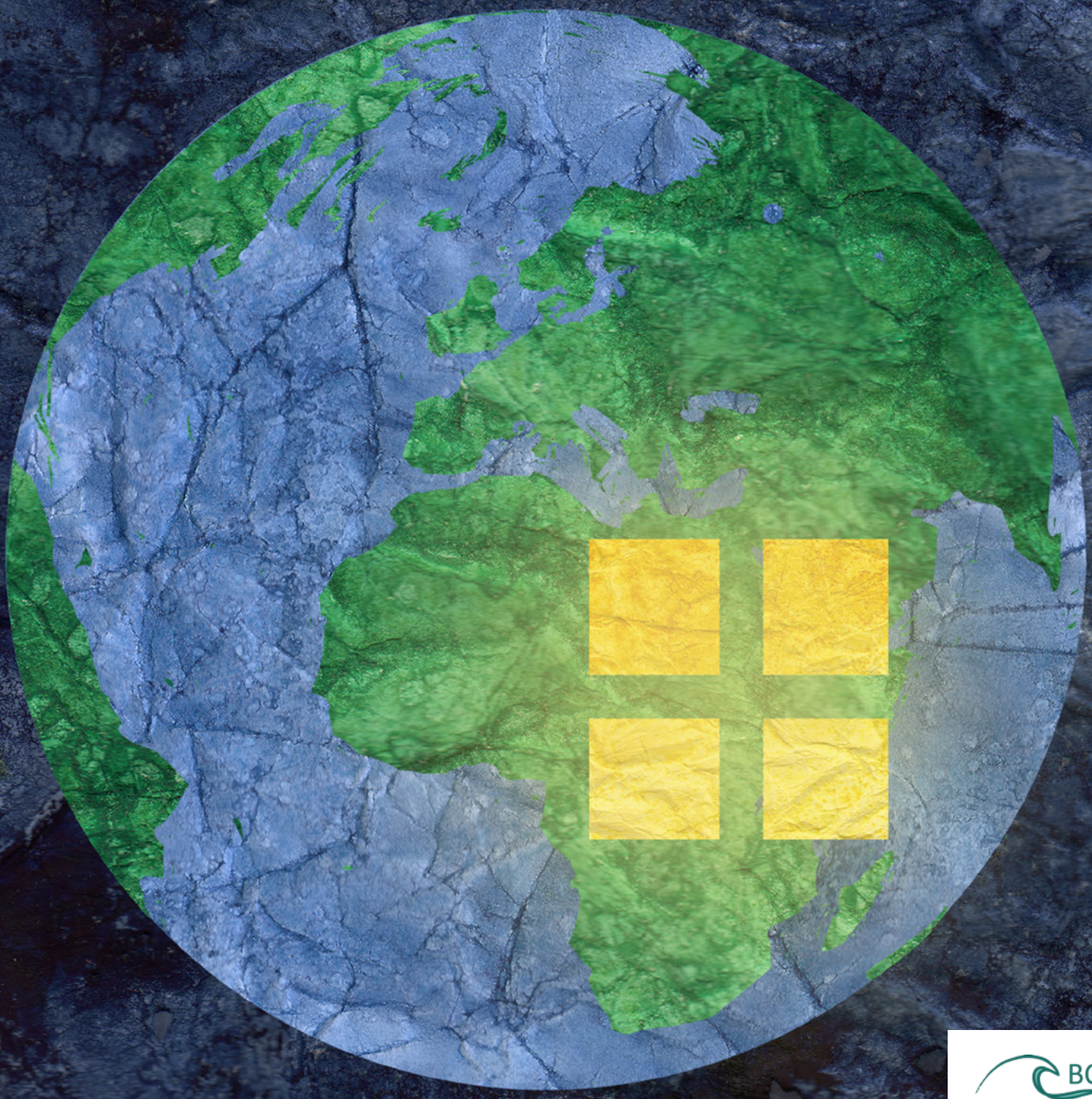
# Reading Between the Lines

## ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2030



BCCIC

The **British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC)** is a network of civil society organizations and individuals moving toward a better world based in British Columbia, Canada. By compiling this report, BCCIC hopes to contribute to the critical debate on Canada's role in developing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For more information on BCCIC or this report, go to: bccic.ca or contact us:
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# FOREWORD

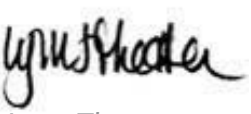
Capturing the space between the Global Goals and describing the patterns of transformation needed to achieve Agenda 2030 is no small challenge. Since 2015 the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) has tasked researchers and writers to pen their thoughts on British Columbia's and Canada's role in our world. *Keeping Score*, our first report, described Canada's strategic advantage. *Keeping Track* was about measuring change. And all three volumes of *Where Canada Stands* examined the Goals in detail from a Canadian perspective. They were impressive reports, involving dozens of writers who kept our editors up at night, toiling over facts and checking references on subjects that were quickly evolving.

Dr. Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber joined BCCIC as our Senior Policy Analyst and Gender Specialist in 2019. She was immediately tasked with producing our 2020 report and briefed on our expected timeline. We wanted to fast forward our thinking in advance of the 2020 High-Level Political Forum that happens every July in New York. More importantly we wanted to help shape Canadian policy on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key to accelerating change in Canada (and positioning Canada as an accelerator of change in the world) is a deeper understanding of the principles of SDG implementation. Finding talented writers, ensuring that Indigenous voices were heard, guiding the research, and keeping the report on time was an introductory deep dive into working for BCCIC. The depth of this report speaks to her gifts and dedication as well as to those of the many contributors who worked with her as the editor. It was truly a collective effort.

BCCIC is supported in part by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), two federal Ministries with whom we share the common vision of a better world. Producing reports like these would be very difficult without their support. It would be impossible without the support of the various writers, researchers, artists, and fact-checking volunteers who every year settle into the hard work of getting the job done.

This year COVID-19 added a whole new dimension to completing the report. Suddenly, we faced an office closure, the added burden of working from home, caring for children while typing references, and the constant nagging worry about the global impact of the virus. Isolated, yet not working in silos, our writers worked faster, harder, and more efficiently than ever before to understand the space between the goals, to uncover the relationship between scales and interlinkages, to measure the impact of spillover and, in essence, to live the very thing they were writing about. Our biggest challenge was curbing their enthusiasm in order to keep the report a reasonable length.

Accelerating changes for the SDGs in the next ten years against incredible odds is possible. It is a matter of revealing the deeper principles that drive the "invisible mosaic" of change makers on our planet. This report is not just about these transformative principles, it is a living *example* of them. We hope you enjoy and find the same meaning in reading this report as the many contributors did in producing it. In a time of COVID-19, in the Decade of Action for the SDGs, it was written for you.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the United Nations (UN) resolution entitled "Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level",[1] the President of the General Assembly reiterated the need for "integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up" on the indivisible and interlinked Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was given a central role in overseeing follow-up and review processes through the sharing and examination of voluntary state-led reviews on national and sub-national progress in the spirit of sharing and learning. The theme of the upcoming HLPF (7-16 July 2020) is "accelerated action and transformative pathways",[2] which has emerged out of a call to action by the Secretary-General, who argued that notwithstanding the progress that has been made and the initiatives that Agenda 2030 has inspired, acceleration of transformative pathways to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient societies is needed.[3] Considering this call to action, this report moves beyond our previous civil society spotlight reports in the Where Canada Stands series[4] and focuses on praxis, by providing an action-focused report for follow-up and acceleration.

The objective of the report is to promote accelerated progress towards the SDGs by providing theoretical and practical recommendations on how to leverage the concept of 'interlinkages' to operationalize Canada's interim national SDG strategy and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The report reflects on the progress that Canada has made when considering interlinkages and the 2030 Agenda. It describes the way that this concept has been understood and utilized by policy makers and practitioners in different sectors and scales. It also provides examples of best practices and innovation, from which recommendations have been developed on how to leverage the concept of interlinkages to promote the acceleration of the SDGs, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Chapter 1 describes how innovative tools, processes, and outputs related to SDG ecosystem mapping can be used to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. It highlights global and Canadian initiatives that have mapped relationships and networks of actors and organizations working on the SDGs. It also explores data mapping to measure progress on the SDGs, and how the co-achievement of SDG targets has been mapped to promote synergies and minimize trade-offs. It recommends that mapping be included as an action in the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*[5] in order to strengthen policy coherence, cross-departmental coordination, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and provides specific examples of how mapping initiatives can be conceptualized, designed, or implemented.

In Chapter 2, the authors focus on the collaboration that is needed within and across multiple levels of government to accelerate SDG implementation, which are described in relation to scales. It refers to innovative modalities for collaboration and nexus approaches that are integrative, inclusive, traverse silos, and allow for effective engagement of stakeholders across sectors. It argues that the nexus approach stimulates a partnership-enabling environment, and thereby creates a space for collaboration and engagement at various scales. It also discusses the importance of horizontal and vertical policy coherence and implementation of the SDGs at global, national, and sub-national levels. It concludes with innovative examples of localization in the Canadian context, and uses the lessons learned to provide recommendations on how to strengthen implementation across scales.

Chapter 3 explores the rationale for multi-stakeholder engagement in a Canadian context to accelerate action on the global Sustainable Development Goals. It explores the nature of 'wicked problem solving' in the context of a Canadian history of multiculturalism, pluralism, and inclusion. It describes the multilateral scale rationale for multicultural approaches, how this approach has been used in British Columbia in the past, and why it promises innovative leaps in generating uniquely Canadian solutions. Referring to Integral Theory and the concept of holarchy, multi-stakeholder engagement is considered in relation to social phenomenon processes that lay the effective foundations for transformative, inclusive solutions best suited to the leave no one behind (LNOB) agenda. It also provides recommendations on how to apply a multi-stakeholder approach at scale in a Canadian context.

In Chapter 4, the transnational spillover effects of Agenda 2030 are considered. In our highly globalized and interdependent world where people, goods, capital, technologies, and resources flow across borders, this chapter reveals how the achievement of the SDGs within a community, region, or country can have positive or negative impacts on the achievement of the Goals elsewhere. It provides examples of Canada's transnational spillover effects in the mining, fishery, and cyber-security sectors. This chapter then goes on to discuss the typology of spillover effects as they apply to the 2030 Agenda, methods for quantifying spillovers, and mechanisms to incorporate spillover analysis into SDG policy decision-making.

Chapter 5 focuses on the innovative ways in which gender lenses have been applied to policies, programs, and initiatives to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. The chapter identifies gender equality as both a singular lens and a cross-cutting measure for the 2030 Agenda, concluding that the latter more closely reflects the integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs. Finally, this chapter provides recommendations with regards to a gender-centric multiple lens approach for the 2030 Agenda that places effort and action across multiple sectors, partnerships, and intersecting inequalities to create a holistic and synergistic approach that leaves no one behind.

Chapter 6 deepens this discussion by reflecting on the conceptualization and utilization of the cross-cutting 'leave no one behind' (LNOB) principle in the Canadian context. It responds to the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*'s[6] request for a clearer understanding of "who is being left behind, the reasons they are being left behind and their specific needs" by providing an intersectional and intergenerational analysis of the severe and intersecting barriers, deprivations and disadvantages that prevent certain individuals and groups from accessing services, resources, and opportunities in Canada. It describes innovative and promising practices that are informed by evidence, consultation and partnership with marginalized groups, and on this basis develops recommendations for the strengthening of the interim national SDG strategy and the foregrounding of LNOB across SDG-related policies and programs in Canada.

Chapter 7 considers COVID-19 in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. This pandemic has shed a spotlight on much of the world's existing inequities and systemic failures. This chapter highlights the key challenges that Canada (like many other countries) has faced when responding to this pandemic, the policies implemented to address some of these challenges, and the need for systems thinking and intersectoral action to ensure a comprehensive, long-term response. It reveals the interlinkages between SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and other key sustainable goals in order to argue that the issues that led to (and relate to) the outbreak of this disease can only be addressed through multi-stakeholder engagement and policy coherence across systems to effect real and equitable change for *all* in what the United Nations refers to as the Decade of Action.[7]

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

*Read between the lines. Look between the Goals to identify and leverage interlinkages across silos, scales, and sectors in order to identify fulcrums of change as well as accelerators and transformative interventions in this Decade of Action.*

- Use a systematic SDG ecosystem mapping approach to comprehensively identify SDG indicator data needs and sources across the country, and include innovative SDG ecosystem mapping of organizations across sectors working on the SDGs in Canada's 2030 strategy to accelerate efforts on all 17 Goals.
- Create a mechanism for working collaboratively with the provinces, territories, and municipalities to implement Agenda 2030 in order to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence, while also promoting nexus approaches, peer-to-peer learning amongst sub-national entities, sharing of lessons learned, and best practices in order to support the incubation and replication of innovation across scales.
- Because more than half of the goals relate directly to Provincial/Territorial jurisdiction, it is urgent and essential for the SDG unit and other federal government entities to coordinate SDG implementation sub-nationally. The federal government must create cohesion, coordination, and coherence across all levels sub-nationally.
- Strengthen Canada's capacity for multi-stakeholder engagement on the implementation of the SDGs by immediately formalizing a multi-stakeholder body with a clear mandate and governance structure and a specific mechanism of accountability to the federal government. Encourage inclusive participation that engages the voices of those most at risk of being left behind, particularly at whole-of-society events such as the High-Level Political Forum and preparatory meetings.
- Harness the lessons of accelerated action (i.e., COVID-19 responses), wicked problem solving, and the potential of solutions that transcend but include (holons) by conducting multi-stakeholder engagement that is skillfully facilitated toward deep solutions. When designing engagement processes, draw from examples in Canadian history of effective multi-stakeholder processes, as well as the international arena (including research on best practices for multi-stakeholder bodies).
- Include spillover analysis in Canada's VNR and follow-up and review processes to accurately reflect whether meeting one target is detracting from the achievement of another target elsewhere. Mandate consistent data reporting for spillover analysis and work with the territories, provinces, and federal ministries to conduct a spillover analysis of Canada's largest resource industries (oil and gas, fisheries, forestry and mining), which have the greatest spillover impacts within Canada and abroad.
- Understand that the application of a gender lens is not synonymous with a singular viewpoint. The interlinked nature of the SDGs, intersectionality, and the holistic nature of women's lives means that many perspectives are required to address the root causes of inequalities and create progress on Goal 5. Strengthen partnerships and participation at all levels, including from those receiving assistance, to solve common problems. Create efficiencies and synergies by bringing together diverse sector actors with unique skills, knowledge, and expertise.
- Translate the LNOB Actions proposed in Canada's interim SDG strategy into concrete commitments, actions, partnerships, and initiatives at federal and sub-national levels. Create action plans with clear timelines, budgets and accountability mechanisms that pay attention to vertical, horizontal (including harmonization with the *Feminist International Assistance Policy*), and temporal policy coherence. Conduct meaningful consultation with marginalized and underrepresented individuals and groups to create these action plans.

- Ensure the foregrounding of LNOB across the interim SDG strategy by participating in peer-to-peer learning processes with international counterparts; considering the recommendations of international human rights committees, CSO reports, and other forms of community-driven data; and commissioning rigorous and ethically sound, intersectional, intergenerational, and gender-based research projects.
- Promote the utilization of human rights-based analysis (HRBA) tools that allow for the identification and prioritization of those 'furthest behind' defined in terms of those who face severe and/or multiple, intersecting deprivations, disadvantages, and forms of discrimination in relation to multiple SDGs or SDG clusters. In doing so, support innovative SDG accelerator interventions that address underlying causal and contributing factors and intersecting vulnerabilities in order to have multiplier impacts not only on specific at-risk groups but for the broader society as a whole, across multiple goals, scales, and silos.
- Develop mechanisms for multi-stakeholder engagement on the cross-cutting issue of leave no one behind and ensure that underrepresented persons can participate equitably in these multi-stakeholder engagement modalities and governance structures, including the proposed External Advisory Committee of Experts and the national SDG Forum.
- Ensure that there is meaningful engagement with communities and people who are left behind by committing to inclusive policy making and adopting participatory methodologies at all stages of the policy cycle. Strengthen the interim national strategy and refine the Canadian Indicator Framework by adding transformative change indicators, indicators that speak to SDG interlinkages, and indicators/ targets that speak to the needs of those furthest behind. Ensure that those at risk of being left behind play an active role in sub-national, national, and VNR reporting on 2030 Agenda progress and participate in Canadian delegations at the HLPF.

*Create public engagement approaches that are founded on an understanding of the nature and developmental stage of diverse target audiences and are designed and implemented collaboratively with these audiences when appropriate. Public engagement, "storytelling from coast to coast to coast", and global citizenship calls to action should include LNOB as thematic content, but they should also showcase diversity, resilience, and agentic behaviour among those individuals and groups classified as having been 'left behind', including their contribution to social justice, sustainable development, and thought leadership.*

- Canada's comprehensive response to COVID-19 and other shocks would benefit from enhanced coordination across federal, provincial/ territory and local levels of government with civil society and advocacy organizations. This would ensure that no one is left behind and that sectors involved in the administration of interlinked SDG targets are efficiently working together.
- Ensure that COVID-19 recovery proceeds through an SDG-sensitive process that locks into place the gains made during the crisis (e.g., on reducing carbon and unsustainable consumption and production). Identifying these opportunities during the current window of crisis is best done through multi-stakeholder engagement.

- Adopt a concerted leadership position in the multilateral arena to quickly increase Canada's International Assistance Envelope to address the SDG setbacks currently being experienced as a result of the crisis (e.g., SDG 1, No Poverty). The current crisis and the need for global action underlines Canada's commitment to 0.7% GNI for our ODA envelope and the need for a negotiated roadmap by 2030 to reach or exceed this contribution.
- Globally, Canada must continue to take a leadership role in protecting health, environmental, and food systems weakened by COVID-19. Health system failures, threats to global food supply, and economic recession—compounded by an ongoing climate crisis—can contribute to famine, conflict, increased displacement, and exacerbated inequality. We need global solidarity and development cooperation to prevent a protracted state of emergency and achieve the SDGs.

*COVID-19 has shone a light on the local dimensions of a global crisis, and public engagement to encourage global citizenship among Canadians is as crucial as ever. The SDGs represent global issues that cannot be solved unless they are solved for everyone. Canada must promote the values of global citizenship in order to garner support for international cooperation, which is a prerequisite for "accelerated action and transformative pathways"[8] in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

# ENDNOTES


1 United Nations, General Assembly, *Follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level*, A/70/L.60 (Distr. Limited 26 July 2016), available from https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/L.60&Lang=E.

2 United Nations, "High-Level Political Forum 2020 under the auspices of ECOSOC," Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform website, available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020.

3 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019*, (New York: United Nations, 2019), available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24978Report_of_the_SG_on_SDG_Progress_2019.pdf.

4 https://www.bccic.ca/sustainable-development-goals/where-canada-stands-sdg-reports/

5 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy," Government of Canada website, July 15, 2019, available from https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/agenda-2030/national-strategy.html.

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7 United Nations, "Decade of Action: Ten years to Transform our World," available from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **AIDS** | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| **AMDV** | Asociación de Mujeres Defensoras de La Vida |
| **BCCIC** | British Columbia Council for International Cooperation |
| **CABHI** | Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation |
| **CAD** | Canadian Dollars |
| **CCIC** | Canadian Council for International Co-operation |
| **CCPA** | Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives |
| **CCREEE** | Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency |
| **CDP** | United Nations Committee for Development Policy |
| **CED** | Community Economic Development |
| **CERB** | Canada Emergency Response Benefit |
| **CHRC** | Canadian Human Rights Commission |
| **CIDA** | Canadian International Development Agency |
| **CIF** | Canadian Indicator Framework |
| **CIRDI** | Canadian International Resources and Development Institute |
| **COH** | Canadian Observatory on Homelessness |
| **COVID-19** | Coronavirus pandemic |
| **CPAG** | Civil Society Policy Advisory Group |
| **CRA** | Canada Revenue Agency |
| **CRPD** | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN) |
| **CSBs** | Civil Society Bodies |
| **CSOs** | Civil Society Organizations |
| **CSOs** | Clinical Support Options |
| **CWF** | Canadian Women's Foundation |
| **CYIC** | Children and Youth in Care |
| **ECOSOC** | United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN) |
| **ESCAP** | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN) |
| **ESDC** | Employment and Social Development Canada |
| **FCM** | Federation of Canadian Municipalities |
| **FIAP** | Feminist International Assistance Policy |
| **FPT** | Federal-Provincial-Territorial |
| **G7** | Group of Seven countries |
| **G20** | Group of Twenty countries |
| **GAC** | Global Affairs Canada |
| **GAINS** | Guaranteed Annual Income System |
| **GBA+** | Gender-Based Analysis Plus |
| **GBV** | Gender-Based Violence |
| **GECCO** | Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan |
| **GIS** | Geographic Information System |
| **GPEDC** | Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation |
| **GRF** | Gender Results Framework |
| **GSA** | Gay Straight Alliance or Gender Sexuality Alliance |
| **HIV** | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| **HLPF** | High-Level Political Forum |
| **HRBA** | Human Rights-based Analysis |
| **ICLEI** | Local Governments for Sustainability |
| **IDD** | Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organization |
| **IMF** | International Monetary Fund |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ISSofBC** | Immigrant Services Society of BC |
| **IGES** | Institute for Global Environmental Strategies |
| **LCA** | Life Cycle Analysis |
| **LGBTQIA2S+** | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit and countless other forms of self-identification |
| **LINC** | Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada |
| **LNOB** | Leave no one behind |
| **LRMP** | Land and Resource Management Planning |
| **LTC** | Long-Term Care |
| **MC** | Multiculturalism |
| **MABRRI** | Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute |
| **MFA** | Material Flows Analysis |
| **MHCC** | Mental Health Commission of Canada |
| **MNC** | Multinational Corporation |
| **MRIO** | Multi-Regional Input-Output |
| **MSB** | Multi-stakeholder Body |
| **MSM** | Men who have sex with men |
| **NCD** | Non-communicable disease |
| **NML** | National Microbiology Laboratory |
| **NPO** | Nonprofit Organization |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organization |
| **ODA** | Official Development Assistance |
| **ODI** | Overseas Development Institute |
| **OECD** | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **OECS** | Organization of Eastern Caribbean States |
| **OSCE** | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| **PHAC** | Public Health Agency of Canada |
| **PPE** | Personal Protective Equipment |
| **PT** | Provincial and Territorial |
| **RFMOs** | Regional Fisheries Management Organizations |
| **SARS-CoV-2** | Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 |
| **SDGs** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SDSN** | Sustainable Development Solutions Network |
| **STAR** | Seniors Transportation Access and Resources |
| **TOC** | Theory of Change |
| **TRC** | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UN-DESA** | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNDRIP** | United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |
| **UNSDG** | United Nations Sustainable Development Group |
| **UPR** | Universal Periodic Review |
| **UNU-WIDER** | United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research |
| **VIU** | Vancouver Island Institute |
| **VNR** | Voluntary National Review |
| **WEC** | Women's Economic Council |
| **WEF** | World Economic Forum |
| **WFP** | United Nations World Food Programme |
| **WGSI** | Waterloo Global Science Initiative |
| **WHO** | World Health Organization |

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# INTRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVES

In the United Nations (UN) resolution entitled "Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level",[1] the President of the General Assembly reiterated the need for "integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up" on transformative pathways for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable society. Under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) was given a central role in overseeing follow-up and review processes. These processes, through the submission of voluntary state-led reviews on national and sub-national progress, aim to "facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned".[2] On July 17, 2018, Canada submitted its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the HLPF, which outlined the actions Canada is taking to implement the 2030 Agenda to create what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described as a "more equal, more prosperous and more inclusive country and world".[3]

In order to provide a more balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive perspective of sustainable development in Canada, the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) produced three spotlight reports in a series entitled *Where Canada Stands*.[4] Each of these reports reviewed specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were on the agenda for discussion at the HLPF in the year they were published. 2019 marked the end of the review cycle, since all the goals had been formally reviewed on a global scale. Consequently, this current report deviates from the format of our previous spotlight reports to speak to the broader theme of the upcoming HLPF (7-16 July 2020) namely, "accelerated action and transformative pathways".[5] This theme has emerged out of a call to action by the Secretary-General, who argued that notwithstanding the progress that has been made and the initiatives that Agenda 2030 has inspired, "the shift in development pathways to generate the transformation required to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required".[6] Considering this call to action, this report will move beyond civil society spotlight reporting to focus instead on praxis, providing an action-focused report for follow-up and acceleration.

The objective of the report is to promote accelerated progress towards the SDGs by providing theoretical and practical recommendations on how to leverage the concept of interlinkages to operationalize the interim national strategy entitled *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy: 30 Actions to 2030*.[7] This strategy was published in July 2019 by the Sustainable Development Goals Unit housed within Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and was informed by nationwide consultation activities involving government, Indigenous people, municipalities, civil society, the private sector, and communities. The 30 Actions outlined in the interim strategy provide an important framework and roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda, but there is a need for concrete commitments, actions, and partnerships to operationalize these Actions. Our report will share useful insights, innovative ideas, and promising practices that could be used to operationalize this strategy and thereby accelerate the 2030 Agenda in Canada.

### Overarching research questions

- What progress has Canada made when considering interlinkages and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals?
- How has the concept of interlinkages been understood and used by policy makers and practitioners in different sectors and at different scales to implement the 2030 Agenda and its underlying principles?
- How has the concept of interlinkages informed best practices and innovation?
- How can policy makers and practitioners leverage interlinkages to promote acceleration of the 2030 Agenda, while ensuring that no one is left behind?

# LEVERAGING INTERLINKAGES FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION

*"Given the strong **interlinkages** among the Sustainable Development Goals, implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires actions that build on synergies among the Goals, enable progress on several Goals (enablers of development) and address trade-offs between targets and policy areas. Considerable knowledge exists about the interlinkages between the Goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, yet institutions, governance and skill sets have not yet adapted to translate this nexus of information into effective whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approaches and cross-sectoral action aligned with the 2030 Agenda."[8] (UN Secretary-General, 2019; emphasis added)*

When the SDGs were first adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the indivisible, interdependent and interlinked nature of the 17 SDGs and their 160 associated targets was emphasized. This implies the need for policy coherence, both vertical and horizontal, which the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines as "the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the defined objectives".[9] The need for strong integration between goals and targets, as well as the proactive identification of interdependencies and their implications, was reiterated at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which focused on the integration of "three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection".[10]

The concept of 'interdependencies' has been usurped by 'interlinkages' in key policy texts. For instance, interlinkages was the theme of the 2017 HLPF thematic review on gender equality[11] and an HLPF report entitled *Advancing the 2030 Agenda: Interlinkages and Common Themes at the HLPF 2018*.[12] This report argued that progress has been made in conceptualizing interlinkages across goals and targets in a more integrated and holistic way, but that "action must now move towards more systematic policy design, implementation and multi-stakeholder collaborations that can translate such understanding into concrete results on the ground".[13] This report includes a list of 'good principles' to follow when using interlinkages for decision-making, such as recognizing the importance of developing a localized understanding of interlinkages and using evidence-based knowledge and knowledge-building processes to promote dialogue and policy convergence, as well as mobilizing collective action among multiple stakeholders around agreed upon priorities for action. It argues that "leveraging" interlinkages is central to "accelerate progress across multiple objectives", and thereby ensure "the overall success of the Agenda".[14]

In 2019, the Secretary-General presented a review of the implementation of the SDGs, based on information emerging from the VNRs and other intergovernmental forums that have contributed to the annual HLPF meetings. As one of eight cross-cutting action areas identified in the review, "Strengthening effective and inclusive institutions for implementing integrated solutions"[15] was raised as an area requiring fundamental and systemic changes. Referring specifically to interlinkages, this section identified nine policy actions, including evidence-informed planning based on the interconnected nature of the goals; the facilitation of "integrated and cross-cutting approaches"; and mobilization of multiple stakeholders for "coherent action" and "integrated" policymaking and implementation.

# UNPACKING INTERLINKAGES

In these policies and reports, 'interlinkages' have been conceptualized in different ways; these differences have informed the structure and content of this report. Each of the concepts listed below will be discussed in separate chapters by SDG experts.

*Modelling and mapping interlinkages:* As will be discussed in Chapter 1, there is extensive literature on mapping interlinkages between SDGs in order to identify synergies and trade offs for the purposes of Agenda 2030 policy and program development, validation, and implementation.[16] This involves the categorization of SDGs; clustering of SDGs according to function, network, or content analysis; and/or prioritizing SDGs for policy action.[17] The HLPF has emphasized that more work needs to be done to enhance the utility value of such models: "There must be a balance between finding the 'perfect model' and a model that is useful and responds to the needs of policy makers and delivers results".[18]

*Interlinkages across scales:* The HLPF has emphasized the importance of localization or domestication of the SDGs, based on an understanding of local, context-specific interlinkages and interconnections.[19] It argues that local governments are often best placed to lead implementation, and that national governments need to work collaboratively with local and regional governments and communities. In addition to resource investments, the creation of legal and financial frameworks, and the strengthening of the capacity of local officials, national and local collaboration also requires the sharing of innovative practices at different levels to promote scale up, replication, and acceleration, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.[20]

*Multi-stakeholder engagement:* The HLPF and OECD have emphasized the importance of ensuring horizontal policy coherence by means of integrated and cross-cutting approaches that mobilize multiple stakeholders, while promoting transparency, accountability, and innovation for accelerated action.[21] As will be explored in Chapter 3, accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires working in partnerships with multiple stakeholders to accelerate transformative change from a whole-of-government and 'whole-of-society' vision, recognizing that "no one set of actors alone can drive progress and that multi-stakeholder action is essential".[22]

*Transboundary spillover effects:* Spillover effects refer to the positive and negative, intended and unintended effects of domestic policies on broader international policies and objectives. Accelerating progress on the SDGs requires becoming aware of these effects, as well as promoting regional, global, and cross-sectoral collaboration and responses to deal with these transboundary effects, including specific measures to target those who are especially poor and vulnerable.[23] Chapter 4 will highlight some of the negative spillover effects associated with Canada's mining, cyber-security, and fishery sectors, while highlighting ways in which these effects can be proactively considered and mitigated.

*Gender lens:* Many actors have argued for an understanding of SDG transformation and change through a gender lens, with attention paid to gender equality (SDG 5) as a core principle of the 2030 Agenda. This also involves mapping SDG 5 interactions with the other goals and using SDG 5 to leverage change across all SDGs.[24] The diverse ways in which gender equality has been used as a lens to accelerate SDG implementation will be discussed in Chapter 5.

*Leave No One Behind:* LNOB is a cross-cutting principle that provides a framework to ensure inclusivity, equity, and social justice across all SDGs by recognizing that "harnessing interlinkages to increase the benefit of synergies and reduce or eliminate trade-offs is challenging specifically for those left behind in different contexts".[25] As will be discussed in Chapter 6, LNOB includes advancing the economic, social, and cultural rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups; designing policies and services to respond to the "multiple and intersecting deprivations and sources of discriminations that are compounded by one another" (i.e., intersectionality); addressing concentrations of wealth, income, and decision-making power; and directing international action to countries that are experiencing the greatest challenges.[26]

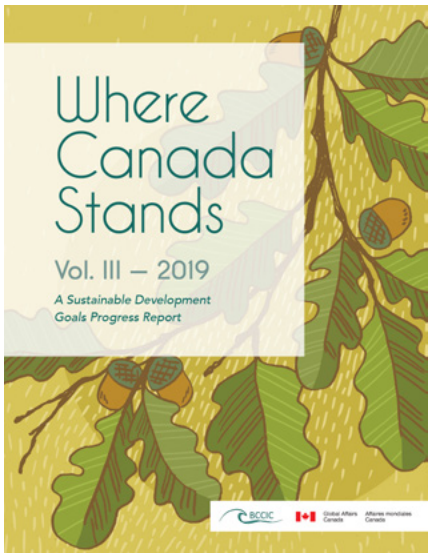
*Harnessing interlinkages to build resilience:* In the face of natural disasters, pandemics, and climate change, building resilience requires risk-informed policies and investments, risk management measures, cross-sectoral collaboration, and cyclical financing to moderate negative impacts.[27] These will be explored in Chapter 7, with specific reference to the impact of COVID-19 on Canada.

# METHODOLOGY

*This report is composed of seven chapters written by several SDG experts and researchers. These authors were carefully selected based on their qualifications, expertise, and experience participating in previous BCCIC spotlight reporting processes. They were provided with overarching research questions and guidelines and encouraged to develop their own research instruments to answer these questions.*

For each of the chapters, the authors conducted a legal-policy analysis at international and domestic levels. They also reviewed academic peer-reviewed journal articles and grey literature, including organizational reports, evaluation reports, periodicals, and media posts. These documents were identified using key search terms related to their topics on Internet search engines and academic databases. Many authors conducted primary research by interviewing SDG stakeholders, who were purposefully selected based on their specific areas of expertise. Researchers developed semi-structured research questionnaires, which were administered in person or over remote platforms, such as Skype and Zoom, to 16 interviewees. For Chapter 6, BCCIC partnered with a development organization called VIDEA,[28] to conduct focus group discussions with Indigenous youth, which included eight youth aged 20 to 30 years, of whom six were women. In addition, the researchers collected written submissions and case studies from ten development practitioners.

Primary and secondary data were analysed by the researchers thematically, and then triangulated to ensure validity. Follow up interviews were also scheduled to clarify information or fill gaps. In addition, draft chapters were peer reviewed by more than 15 stakeholders to verify findings and strengthen recommendations. The final report will be shared with all respondents and reviewers, all of whom have been officially acknowledged for their participation in this project.



# LIMITATIONS

COVID-19 has posed numerous challenges for this research project. Consultations with Indigenous youth were restricted as a result of forced physical distancing. Many stakeholders were not available for interviews due to the pandemic. In-person interviews were either cancelled or moved to an online format, which had a significant impact on the sample size and the quality of the data collected. The authors have faced numerous professional and personal challenges as a result of COVID-19. In order to ensure that the report was relevant, additional content had to be included on COVID-19. This changed the scope of many chapters and required the addition of a separate chapter on multi-stakeholder engagement in the context of the pandemic (Chapter 7), which was not originally planned.

Despite these concerns, COVID-19 has forced us to question the 'business as usual' approaches that we tend to revert to in response to development problems. It has forced us to think out of the box, question assumptions, and test the underlying premises and tenets of what we do. In fact, COVID-19 provides a unique opportunity to put the theories, actions, and multi-stakeholder engagement models associated with Agenda 2030 to the test. It also provides an opportunity to push the LNOB agenda forward. And indeed, one could argue that out of 'necessity' (See Chapter 3), this new challenge is fertile breeding ground for innovation; instead of undermining or reversing the progress that has been made since the birth of this ambitious agenda, it may in fact help us collectively transform our planet in this final decade of action.

As a caveat, the chapters were all written by different authors, emerging from different backgrounds, contexts, and areas of expertise. In some cases, authors discuss specific issues or concepts from different lenses, perspectives, and positionalities; at times this may appear repetitive or even contradictory. We do not see this as a limitation, because it is our belief that convergence will only emerge out of an understanding of diverse perspectives, and that it is only out of plurality of thought that constructive dialogue, policy coherence, and collective action will emerge. For this reason, an editorial decision was made to showcase these differences in interpretation, opinion, and argument rather than to tone them down or iron them out.

In terms of gaps, this report does not discuss the mobilization of adequate financing for the SDGs, investments in national data and statistical systems, and the equitable and ethical use of science and technology, all of which were mentioned as key action areas in the Secretary-General's Special Report on SDG Progress (2019).[29] It should also be noted that this report discusses cross-cutting themes and concepts, rather than providing a 'deep dive' on specific SDGs, as was the approach taken in previous BCCIC spotlight reports. However, given the theme of 'follow up and review' and the HLPF's calls for innovation and transformation, specifically in relation to interlinkages, this report seeks to advance the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by sharing innovative and best practice examples, and by providing very specific practical and theoretical recommendations on how policymakers and development practitioners can promote policy coherence, whole-of-society approaches, and cross-sectoral action that leaves no one behind.

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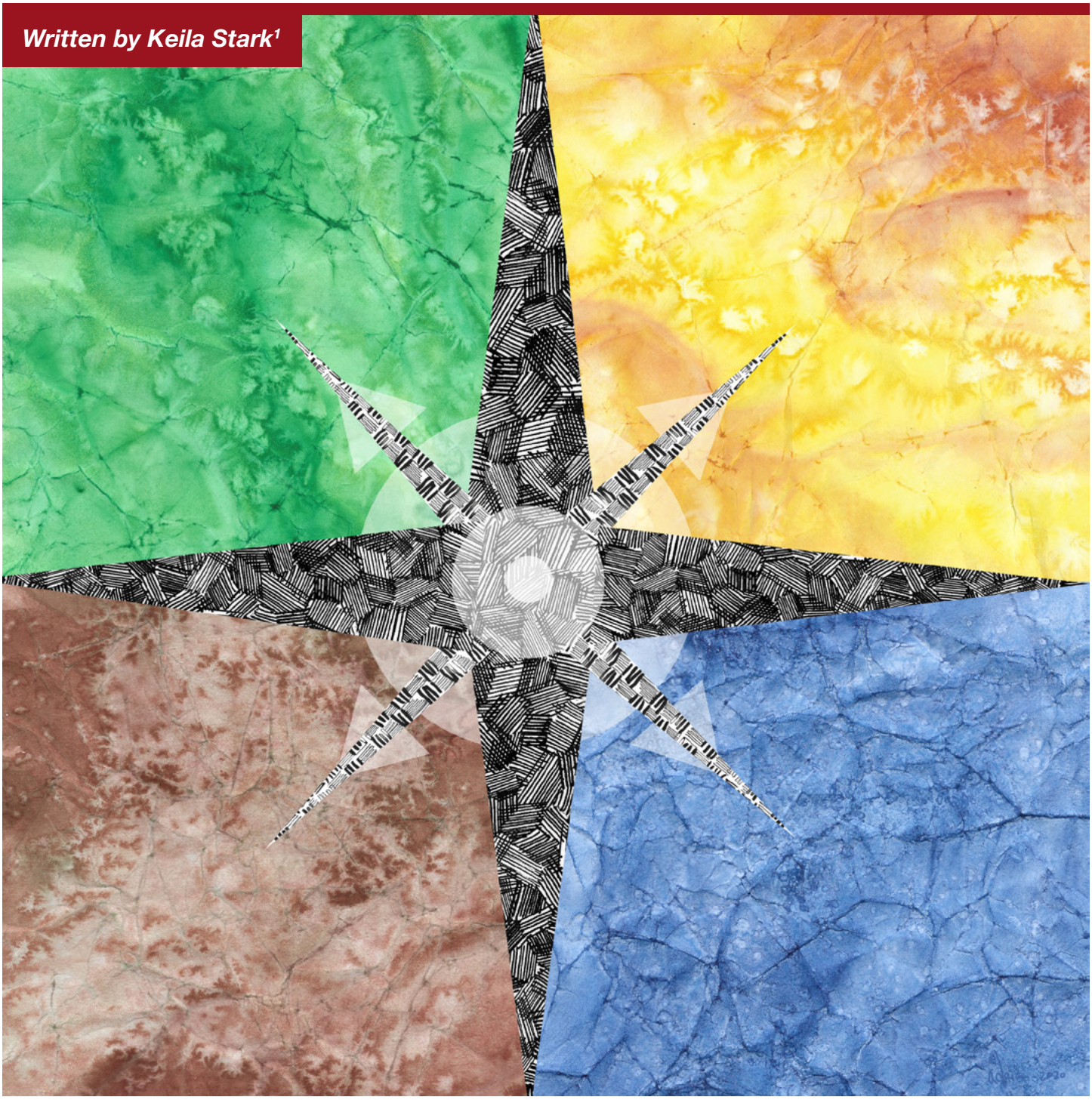
# CHAPTER 1: MAPPING SDG ECOSYSTEMS

*Written by Keila Stark*[1]



# ABSTRACT

Ecosystem mapping involves systematically seeking out information, organizing the information, and visually representing relationships embedded in that information in an efficient way. Both the process and output of mapping SDG ecosystems can contribute to meeting the 2030 Agenda. To date, the majority of SDG mapping initiatives have implemented one of three types of maps: maps of actors or organizations working on the SDGs, maps of the data used to measure progress on the SDGs, and maps visualizing the co-achievement of the SDG targets themselves. This chapter reviews the three types of maps that have been implemented to achieve the 2030 Agenda, how they have been implemented, and how they have been used to inform SDG mobilization efforts and policy across the globe.[2]


# INTRODUCTION

In the field of ecology, ecosystems are dynamic systems consisting of relationships between multiple organisms and their physical environment. Ecosystem mapping is a visualization of these relationships—the linkages between various entities within a system. This terminology has been applied to concepts, actions, individuals, or organizations within human society—to map these human-made "ecosystems" is to comprehensively represent all important entities and relationships within a system that might not necessarily be apparent from focusing on just one or a few closely linked entities. Effective mapping draws from principles in psychology, graphic design, and statistics, with the aim of reducing barriers to understanding critical information such as limited time, background knowledge, or information overload.[3] It is intended to increase efficiency in the transmission of information between the producers and consumers of information, and can be used for exploring (testing alternative hypotheses) or explaining ideas with the aim of objectively educating or informing.[4]

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have strong interlinkages, where achieving one goal also achieves many others. Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires tools to help us easily understand these complex relationships. Several research and policy initiatives aimed at furthering the 2030 Agenda have attempted to map relationships to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. Although there are diverse interpretations and applications of mapping related to the SDGs, SDG mapping initiatives typically have the following processes in common: seeking and gathering SDG-related information, organizing and categorizing this information on one platform, and representing this information visually. To date, the majority of SDG mapping initiatives have implemented one of three types of maps: maps of actors or organizations working on the SDGs, maps of the data used to measure progress on the SDGs, and maps visualizing the co-achievement of the SDG targets themselves. In all three mapping types, both the process of gathering information as well as the dissemination of the final visual product are useful for partnership-building, policy implementation, and follow-up and review.

The process of compiling information in and of itself can be a revealing exercise because it identifies previously unknown linkages between organizations and their work on the SDGs. Rather than gathering information in an ad hoc or random fashion, mapping usually involves a systematic process of collating information. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, this would ensure a thorough review of SDG progress, and would highlight interactions that run the risk of leaving people behind.[5] Multiple countries have created and presented various types of maps in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) to showcase their efforts and progress to implement the 2030 Agenda. Albania's first VNR included an institutional map linking each government agency's work to the SDGs.[6] Ireland submitted a version of its SDG Policy Map, which links certain national policies to SDG targets, as well as national policy objectives.[7] Ireland also has a centralized GIS-based SDG data hub that houses freely accessible indicator data, and visualizes them in an eye-catching and easy-to-understand fashion.[8]

In Canada, there has been no explicit reference to the need for mapping or visual tools in the federal government's interim strategy on the SDGs. However, there is a clear need for mapping when considering the Office of the Auditor General's recommendation that cross-departmental collaboration in the federal SDG strategy is essential, since the task of achieving the 17 diverse goals spans multiple government ministries, including Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Employment and Social Development, and Environment and Climate Change.[9] In July 2018, Canada submitted a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the 2030 Agenda. BCCIC observed that the full body of goal-specific expertise among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and local communities was not systematically consulted for input on this VNR,[10] in part due to time and resource constraints. Investing in and consulting maps that summarize resources and expertise across government departments, NGOs, research institutions, and the private sector will ensure that SDG implementation in Canada proceeds swiftly, and that future VNRs reflect the full scope of expert opinion across the country and at multiple levels of jurisdiction.

This chapter aims to promote the value of ecosystem mapping to achieve an accelerated 2030 Agenda. We summarize the three types of SDG ecosystem maps and present examples of each, exploring how both the process of systematically gathering information and the final visual representation of information are useful for SDG implementation. The chapter concludes with recommendations for mobilizing SDG ecosystem mapping efforts.

# THREE TYPES OF SDG ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

In an attempt to make a broad concept more tractable for discussion, we define three main types of mapping applied within the 2030 Agenda context: 1) mapping the relationships between organizations working on various SDGs; 2) mapping SDG data ecosystems; and 3) mapping SDG target interlinkages. We define the three types of maps and outline how the process and final product associated with each type of map contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

### *Mapping organizations' effort and expertise*

Several initiatives have used the ecosystem mapping concept to better understand the landscape of actors or organizations working on the goals. These organizational maps have ranged in geographic scale from cities to countries, and have mapped work done by governments, non-profits, academia, and industry in order to identify existing interventions, enhance collaboration, reduce redundancy, and identify gaps where more effort is needed.

One example is an interactive online mapping tool that visualizes a database of more than 100 organizations working on the goals in the City of Geneva, developed by the Perception Change Project out of the United Nations (UN) Office at Geneva.[11] The project aims to promote the ongoing work of the UN and others on the

*Figure 1 a: The Perception Change Project's SDG Mapping Initiative classifies organizations working on the SDGs into ten areas of expertise.*

*Figure 1b: A screenshot of the Perception Change Project's interactive map showing the number of Geneva organizations specializing in "research and collection of data" by SDG.*

Sustainable Development Goals. The map classifies organizations' activities under 10 types of expertise (Fig. 1a and 1b); these expertise areas are diverse in their nature but are all necessary for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, it is impossible to conduct data analysis (*data analysis, harmonization and statistics*) without collecting the necessary data first (*research and collection of data*). Similarly, even if data suggests that a particular policy is necessary to achieve a given SDG target, adequate financial flows to cover the costs of the required policy intervention are needed to achieve the target. The Perception Change Project's online database and user-friendly map provide a central location to house information on organizations and how their diverse expertise can be used to contribute to 2030 Agenda implementation. This makes it possible for each individual organization to identify sources of support, while also ensuring that an oversight body such as the UN is able to gain a full picture of who is capable of contributing to a policy intervention in a given community.

One step up in spatial scale, Canadian graphic design and innovation collective BIG17 is working on a British Columbia Impact Enablement Ecosystem Map. BIG17 is a collective of designers and innovative thinkers who are passionate about creating solutions to help organizations and communities increase their positive social, economic, and environmental impact. They strongly believe in the value of effective graphic design as a tool to further sustainable development. Their ecosystem map aims to empower social and environmental impact organizations to quickly understand what resources and collaborations are available to accelerate their organizations' mandates.[12] Their map is an open-source tool designed to increase collaboration; reduce duplicated efforts; and help identify gaps, needs, and opportunities in the context of the SDGs.

On the process of mapping organizational expertise, Julie Tremblay, project lead and graphic designer notes: "The exercise of creating the map itself requires collaboration, connecting dots, and talking to a lot of people. What we are discovering is that by creating the map, we become connectors in the community, and we see collaboration and awareness of the SDGs increasing as a result. At this stage, we are running with the assumption that increased collaboration and knowledge speeds up the pace of execution of initiatives related to the SDGs."[13] BIG17's map is currently in the development stage; information is being gathered and compiled into a database with each organization's contact information, mandate, and geographic scale of activities. The next phase will entail visually representing this information in an eye-catching graphic, which is where Julie and BIG17's graphic design expertise is valuable.

# CASE STUDY
## MAPPING ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERTISE FOR THE SDGS

In all types of SDG ecosystem mapping, both the *process* and *final output* of ecosystem mapping are useful for tracking SDG progress, identifying expertise, and informing policy interventions.

In the case of BCCIC's SDG Movement Map, both the mapping process and its output have been revealing for organizations working on the SDGs, as well as policy makers in Canada and abroad. In 2015, soon after the adoption of the SDGs, BCCIC toured over 35 communities across the province to learn whether organizations felt that the 2030 Agenda would add value to their work. From these 2030 Roundtables it became clear that although many organizations were already working on the SDGs, they did not necessarily recognize their work within the language and framework of the 2030 Agenda. As a result, the Movement Map concept was developed with the aim of making this "invisible mosaic" of SDG effort visible. What started out as a provincial-scale map has since grown to include organizations across all of Canada.

The process of building the map from the ground up involved generating a list of civil society organizations from across Canada using Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) data[14][15] and provincial directories of nonprofits in each province. This preliminary list was a springboard for a large effort that entailed validating the existence and ongoing activities of organizations on these lists, then data-mining for information such as geographic location, contact information, website URLs, and of course, which SDG targets they work on.

The findings of the mapping process have spurred BCCIC to reach out to organizations to elucidate how their work is aligned with the SDGs. A network analysis was conducted on Movement Map web data, which revealed how more than 1800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the map are connected through Internet hyperlinks.[16] This analysis revealed that BCCIC's Movement Map was a key node connecting hundreds of organizations over the web that might not otherwise be able to find each other (Fig. 2a). It also became apparent that there is already a wealth of organizations working on the 17 goals, even if they do not recognize their work through the 2030 Agenda lens (Fig. 2b). Having an eye-catching and intuitive representation of organizational effort on the goals is an effective hook for beginning a conversation on the role that local organizations can play to promote global citizenship and further Agenda 2030. In this way, the mapping process has become an effective public engagement tool to raise awareness of the existence of the SDGs among civil society organizations.

*BCCIC's Movement Map (Source: Orton Mak).*

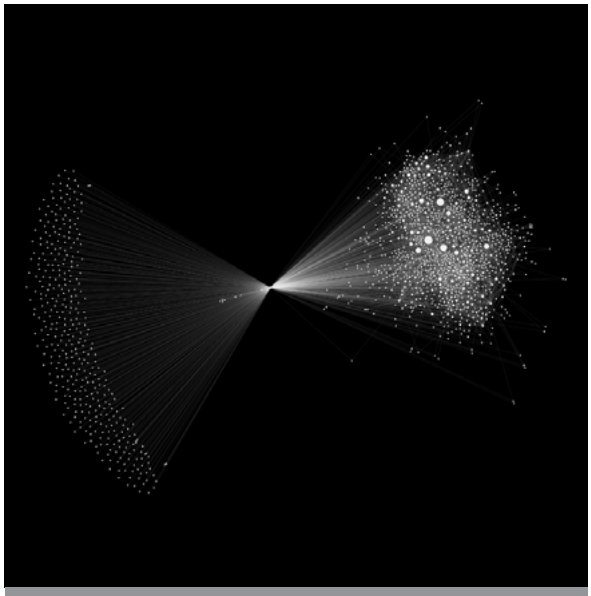


*Figure 2a: Visualization of a social network analysis conducted on BCCIC Movement Map data. Nodes represent organizations and lines represent linkages between two organizations through internet hyperlinks.*

*Figure 2b: The same organizations visualized based on similarities in connectedness to other organizations. Ten online communities emerged from this analysis, centering around clusters of various SDGs. Images from Maryam Khezrzadeh.*[17]

The process has also catalyzed transboundary partnerships and information exchanges. The Movement Map has received interest from abroad. Other multi-stakeholder bodies outside of Canada, such as the German Council for Sustainable Development, are interested in BCCIC's expertise and are allocating significant investments towards their own SDG ecosystem maps.[18]

The product of this process is, of course, the Movement Map: a web-based, interactive map which anyone can access and search for information on the 11,933 (as of April, 2020) civil society groups across the globe working on the SDGs. The findings that resulted from compiling the Movement Map have also gone into useful analyses that reveal the landscape of effort currently being allocated towards the 2030 Agenda.

A recent analysis of Movement Map data in preparation for the 64th Commission on the Status of Women revealed that there were 819 Canada-based organizations working on SDG 5 (Gender Equality). These organizations have projects that focus on women's empowerment in Canada and abroad. A more detailed analysis of the nature of these organizations' work shows the distribution of effort by target. The bar plot in Figure 3 suggests that 53.4% (437 out of 819) listed organizations state that they work on Target 5.2 (ending gender-based violence and exploitation), whereas only 1.2% of organizations (10 out of 819) work on Target 5.4 (valuing unpaid care and domestic work). This information can be directly used to mobilize resources for a particular intervention.[19]

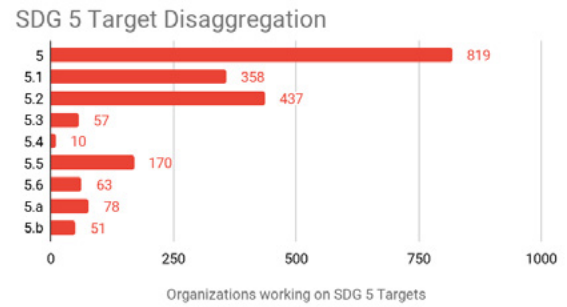



*Figure 3: Barplot showing the number of organizations on BCCIC's Movement Map working on SDG 5 (Gender Equality), aggregated by Goal 5 targets.*

Map outputs also allow us to observe synergies between the goals. Figure 4 shows the number of organizations working on each SDG across Canada; the black line and numbers on the coloured bars indicate the number of organizations that also work on SDG 5 and should be the focus of the reader's attention when looking for synergies between SDG 5 and others.

The analysis shows that SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is most frequently worked on simultaneously with (in order from highest to lowest) SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities). The number of organizations working on SDG 5 in combination with the rest of the goals is significantly smaller.

It is noteworthy that of the 3,283 listed civil society organizations working on education, only 148 (4.5%) of them are also acting to improve issues of gender equality. Surprising findings like this are an excellent example of the value of mapping outputs for identifying effort gaps to be filled for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Of course, the Movement Map allows us to see more broad synergies across the goals; 49.5% of all organizations on the Movement Map are working on more than one SDG and 17.2% work on more than two SDGs.

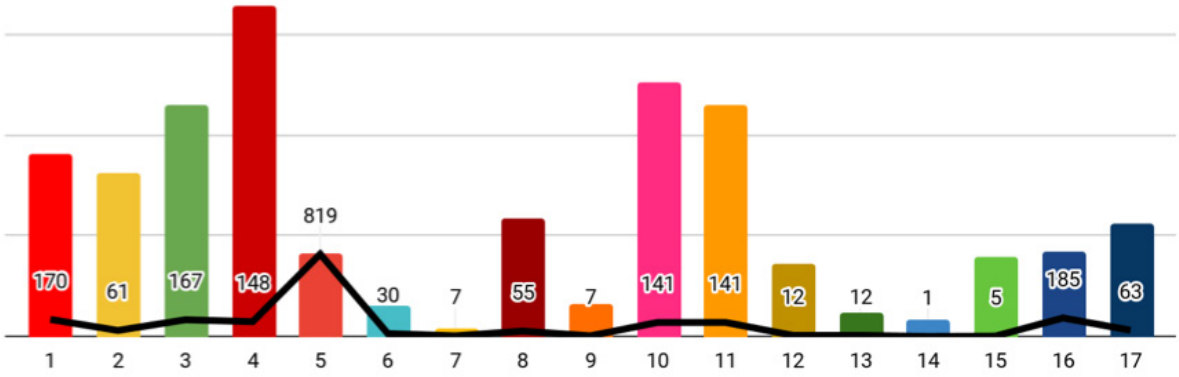



*Figure 4: Barplot representing the number of BCCIC Movement Map organizations working on each of the 17 Goals. The black line corresponds with the numbers shown on the bars, representing the number of organizations working on Goal 5 in addition to the other SDGs (for example, of the 819 organizations working on SDG5, 170 also work on SDG 1). Bar heights represent the total number of organizations working on the 17 goals, independent of whether they work on SDG 5.*

### *Mapping data ecosystems*

Accurately reporting progress on 17 goals, 169 targets, and 231 indicators is a complex task that requires large amounts of data. One of the greatest challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda is identifying who is 'being left behind'[20] from data (e.g., populations not reflected in indicator data) and translating the findings of indicator data into actionable policies. The breadth of the SDGs requires different types of data (demographic, economic, social and environmental) collected at different spatial and temporal scales to assess whether or not policy interventions are improving the state of things.

Development researchers have emphasized the importance of characterizing data ecosystems for reporting progress on 2030 Agenda implementation, but data ecosystem mapping has yet to be implemented to inform SDG policy.[21] Generally, the process entails systematically identifying data needs, data sources, and the types of data available for indicator tracking. Van den Homberg and colleagues[22] propose an integrated framework for data ecosystem characterization to strengthen reporting on the SDGs. Data ecosystems consist of five dimensions: actors and roles, data supply, data demand, data infrastructure, and data ecosystem governance (Fig. 5). **Actors** refer to individuals or entities who either require the data (consumers), who collect the data (producers), or who process, manage or store the data (intermediaries). **Demand** refers to the problem or need for the data; for example, meeting SDG Target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty everywhere by 2030) requires information on Indicator 1.1.1 (proportion of population below the poverty line by sex, age, employment status, and location). The need to measure Indicator 1.1.1 is an example of data demand. **Supply** refers to the characteristics of how those data are produced, such as whether the sample size is adequate and the data collection unbiased. **Data infrastructure** refers to attributes of the data themselves and how easily they can be used. This may include whether the data are openly accessible to any user, whether they are "Big Data" (latently collected through cell phone or Internet user data, housing data, etc.) or "Small Data" (collected in a controlled manner for the express purpose of answering a research question),[23] and how reliable the data are. **Data ecosystem governance** includes the collaboration, communication, and capacity of all actors in the data demand and supply process. Taken together, these five dimensions of data ecosystems provide an enhanced understanding of how to efficiently mobilize existing data to meet the data demands associated with achieving the 2030 Agenda (i.e., Indicator data) and to identify data gaps that must be filled now to meet the 2030 deadline.

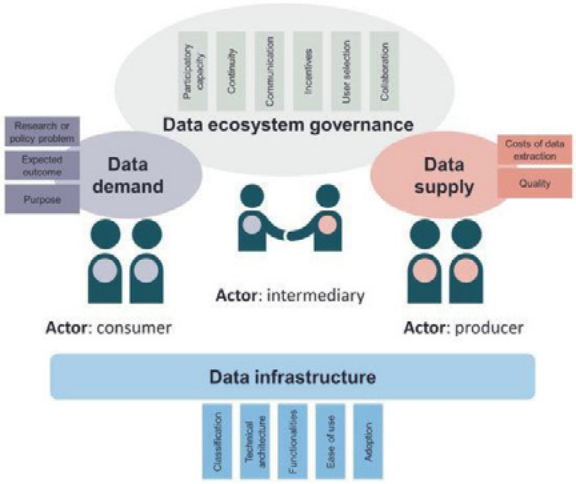



*Figure 5: Schematic diagram depicting a framework for characterizing data ecosystems (Van den Homberg and Susha 2018). The five main attributes of a data ecosystem include actors, data demand, data supply, data infrastructure, and data ecosystem governance.*

An excellent example of an interactive data ecosystem mapping tool produced by an intergovernmental organization is the World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Strategic Intelligence* website (Fig. 6).[24] While it does not explicitly adopt the language of the SDGs, the topics covered and visual representation of interlinkages between these topics implicitly evokes the interconnectedness of health, food security, peace and justice institutions, sustainable consumption, sustainable production, and environmental protection. Figure 6 below illustrates an example in which the user has chosen the topic of biodiversity (which addresses SDGs 14 and 15). The user has clicked on the core biodiversity topic "Conservation, Restoration and Regeneration", which results in the map highlighting (in blue) linkages to water (SDG 6); infrastructure (SDG 9); global health (SDG 3); forests (SDG 15); oceans (SDG 14); public finance and social protection; and environmental and natural resource security. The tool also acts as a roadmap for users to find and access thousands of research articles on these interlinked subjects, thereby functioning as an accessible, user-friendly data ecosystem map.

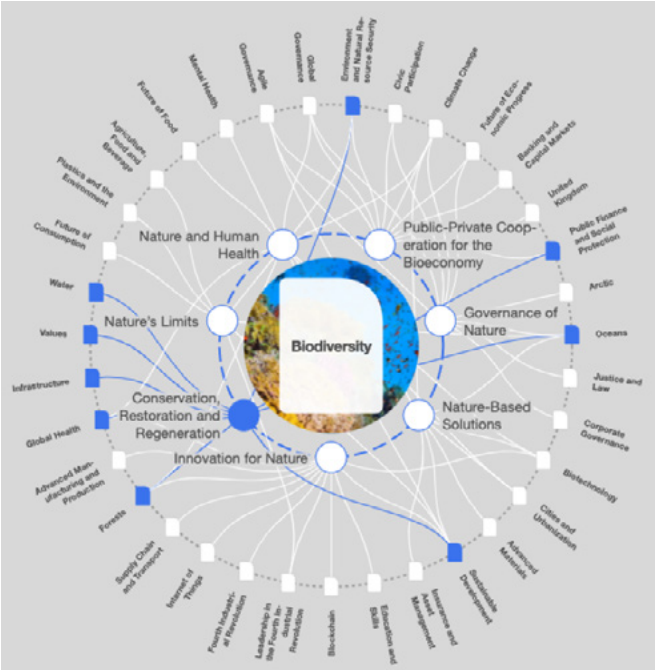



*Figure 6: A screenshot from the World Economic Forum's Strategic Intelligence website, which represents a database of publications focusing on numerous global issues represented in the outer circle of this image. Here, the entire system of global issues is represented from the lens of Biodiversity (SDGs 14 and 15).*

As we move towards the next decade of accelerated action for the SDGs, Statistics Canada's SDG Data Hub has an exciting opportunity to apply the data ecosystem mapping framework in a Canadian context. Statistics Canada has been tasked with collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data to monitor our national progress on the 17 goals. At the time of writing this report, data sources to elucidate progress on the goals are being identified.[25] Thus far, the indicators are a patchwork of data collected at various spatial scales. Work needs to be done to exhaustively identify all valuable data sources across the country not only from Statistics Canada but also from universities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. These nongovernment entities sometimes offer more robust data collection methods, or data that is finer in spatial scale (community, municipal, provincial) than more official data sources. Identifying and incorporating these data sources into Canada's national SDG strategy will ensure that the nuances that emerge from the great regional heterogeneity in land and people are captured.

Information housed on the SDG Data Hub, such as data sources for each SDG indicator, could also be visually represented in a similar fashion to the examples presented here. The SDG targets and indicators, information about the data sources (i.e., who collected the data, what types of organizations are collecting the data, whether the data are openly accessible), and the data themselves could be represented as an interactive application. Such an application could also double as an action tool for groups working on the goals, as well as an educational tool for schools and the general public to better understand implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Canada.

### *Mapping the interconnectedness and co-achievement of SDG targets*

As the SDGs are interconnected, it is presumed that achieving one goal would result in the achievement of other goals. The third type of mapping used to further 2030 Agenda implementation explicitly reveals these linkages through quantitative methods. Raw indicator data are not meaningful unless they are analyzed and presented in a way that is easy to understand, gives a clear picture of whether performance is improving, and most importantly, identifies where the leverage points are for filling performance gaps. Two approaches used to date are a geospatial approach and a quantitative network analysis approach.

The geospatial approach entails producing maps using spatially explicit data, such as geographic information system (GIS) layers of social, economic, or environmental variables. A good example of this is the UN's interactive SDG Story Map, which was produced in collaboration with Esri (originally the Environmental Systems Research Institute), an international company that supplies GIS software, and is accessible through the UN's SDG Knowledge Platform.[26] The SDG Story Map allows the user to read story-like text summarizing information and case studies for each of the 17 goals. The ArcGIS-hosted map automatically zooms in and out on different parts of the globe to display the data described in the case studies as the user scrolls through the text (Fig. 7). The user is also able to hover a cursor over the map to read data for certain regions or countries, to see the percentage of the population with access to electricity (Goal 7), growth of the bottom 40% of the population (Goal 10), or the corruption perception index (Goal 16), to name just a few examples. Acceleration of the 2030 Agenda is the primary objective for this map: "At Esri, we believe that mapping a smarter future will help achieve the

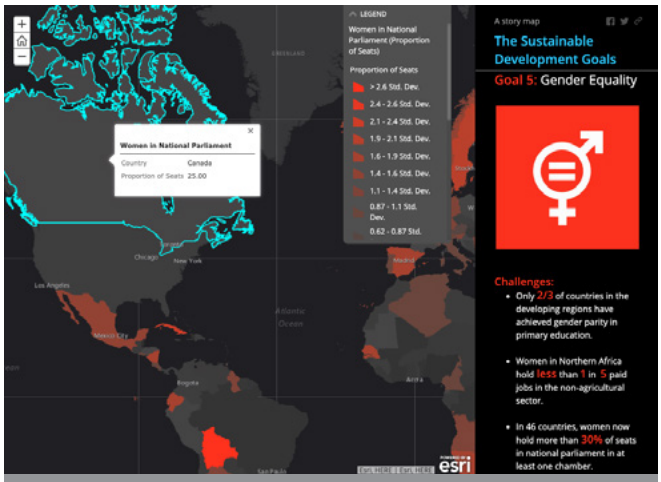

LEGEND
Women in National Parliament (Proportion of Seats)
Proportion of Seats
> 2.6 Std. Dev.
2.4 - 2.6 Std. Dev.
2.1 - 2.4 Std. Dev.
1.9 - 2.1 Std. Dev.
1.6 - 1.9 Std. Dev.
1.4 - 1.6 Std. Dev.
1.1 - 1.4 Std. Dev.
0.87 - 1.1 Std. Dev.
0.62 - 0.87 Std.
Women in National Parliament
Country Canada
Proportion of Seats 25.00
A story map
The Sustainable Development Goals
Goal 5: Gender Equality
Challenges:
Only 2/3 of countries in the developing regions have achieved gender parity in primary education.
Women in Northern Africa hold less than 1 in 5 paid jobs in the non-agricultural sector.
In 46 countries, women now hold more than 30% of seats in national parliament in at least one chamber.
esri

*Figure 7: A screenshot of the UN SDG Story Map, focusing on SDG5: Gender Equality. The shading of countries refers to the proportion of women in national parliament.*

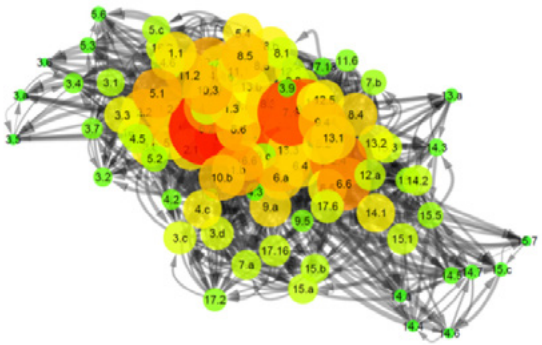


*Figure 8: A visual representation of interlinkages within a complicated SDG target network. Interlinkages were calculated using quantitative social network analysis. The size of the circles represents how strongly achieving that given target will influence the achievement of other targets. Figure taken from Zhou et al. (2017).*

Sustainable Development Goals. Most of the Goals are inherently geographic in nature; utilizing GIS will help accelerate progress toward achieving each goal".[27] To have the world's most ubiquitous mapping software company promoting the SDGs on their platform speaks to the important role of the private sector in promoting and accelerating the 2030 Agenda.

The quantitative mapping approach entails using numbers to quantify the strength of co-achieving specific goals or targets as values or indices. These indices can be easily visualized as maps to draw attention to the strongest goal or target linkages. Nilsson and colleagues present one method that qualitatively and quantitatively classes interactions between SDGs.[28] The bidirectional relationship between two goals or targets can be quantified as indivisible (cannot meet one without the other), reinforcing (achieving one aids in the achievement of the other), enabling (creates conditions that further the other), consistent (no interaction), constraining (limits options on the other), counteracting (clashes with the achievement of the other), or cancelling (prohibits the achievement of the other).

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) has done extensive work developing highly quantitative methods to identify SDG target interlinkages.[29] They have used Social Network Analysis to quantify and visualize the relationships between individual SDG targets at the global scale. The "centrality" of a particular SDG target is an index that quantifies the number and strength of linkages between a particular target and all other targets. It is a straightforward, practical tool that can aid the prioritization of certain policy actions or the co-achievement of one or more targets with a single policy action (Fig. 8).

Overall, the quantitative approach to mapping the achievement of the SDGs is a very effective tool for prioritizing policy actions and the allocation of resources. For example, if one target has a high centrality value or strong linkages to the achievement of other targets, then it would make sense to invest limited financial resources and effort into that target over others.

# WHY IS MAPPING CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA?

As previously noted, SDG mapping initiatives are unified by the act of systematically seeking out information, compiling it in one place, and representing the linkages within that information visually. Given this, we identify and explore three main reasons why mapping is necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

### *Breaking down silos*

> *"Working on our map, it became clear that individuals and organizations were familiar with their own strands of the ecosystem, but did not have a holistic picture of the whole ecosystem on a larger scale."*
>
> — *Luke Mennigke, former Movement Map coordinator, BCCIC*

Furthering the SDGs involves working across sectors, from the government to the nonprofit and private sectors. Often these sectors work in silos. For example, nonprofits tend to know about other nonprofits working on similar issues, but they are less likely to know about relevant collaborators in the private sector. Mapping initiatives or roundtables that convene organizations, can be the catalyst for such cross-sectoral partnerships. SDG Watch Europe is an example of this; their mapping tool represents how multi-stakeholder coalitions have organized to implement the SDGs at the national and regional levels.[30] Twenty-seven coalitions in 23 countries are listed on SDG Watch Europe, which consists of civil society organizations from very diverse backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the SDGs.

For instance, clicking on Hungary within the SDG Watch map leads to a page that has identified the *Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organizations for Sustainable Development* as the central coalition for mobilizing SDG implementation at the national level. The roundtable conducts public engagement to mainstream the SDGs, monitors implementation in Hungary, and was invited to make contributions to Hungary's 2018 VNR. Not only does this map allow one to identify different coalitions at a national and regional level (in this case the European Union), but it also provides insight into coalition governance structures, objectives, and modalities, all of which are useful for the purposes of lesson learning and replication. SDG Watch's map, therefore, provides information that could strengthen collaboration among coalition members and facilitate collaboration among coalitions in the European Union, while also providing an evidence-base for the development or strengthening of coalitions in other contexts.

### *SDG education, awareness, and capacity building*

Referring to BCCIC's Movement Map, Maryam Khezradeh, explained that "The term "Invisible Mosaic" [has been used…] to describe the emerging myriad of groups already working on the SDGs whose efforts remain largely unknown to the public, politicians and even many of the organizations themselves."[31] The process of mapping organizations working on the 2030 Agenda is a unique way to raise awareness about the SDGs. Mapping also generates awareness of other organizations doing similar work that could be potential collaborators and helps avoid unnecessary duplication. For governments or funding agencies, mapping provides a comprehensive picture of where efforts are being allocated and where there are gaps requiring more resources.

The final mapping product may also mobilize funding. With a visually appealing, easy to understand map, a nonprofit can confidently approach policy makers or potential funders to make a case for allocating more resources towards certain organizations or towards certain causes. The final map may also identify different organizational strengths and thereby provide information when designing peer learning opportunities among different organizations. By elucidating gaps in knowledge and expertise, it could also support the design and implementation of capacity-building interventions on certain issues.

### *Accelerated decision-making and action*

As previously mentioned, one of the key aims of effective data visualization is to remove barriers to understanding complex information. Barriers to understanding may include time constraints, an unmanageable amount of information to process at once, or a lack of background knowledge to comprehend esoteric information that was produced from a particular discipline. Visual communication may promote accelerated decision-

making and action, as argued by Julie Tremblay, the BIG17 BC Impact Enablement Map Project Lead:

> *"Visual communication is one of the most powerful ways to convey complex ideas to a broad range of audiences in a way that lets them quickly grow their knowledge. Our goal is to have the map circulate online for many viewers that don't have the time to research and understand the matter to have access to the information so that they can make more informed decisions."*

Enhanced efficiency in information processing directly translates into an accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, to meet SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Canada must aim to end all boil water advisories in Indigenous and rural communities across the country. This could take several years for the planning and construction of water treatment facilities before any observable improvement is made. Having the right data, expertise, and infrastructure in place to quickly understand which targets are lagging, which organizations can step in to help carry out required interventions, and how to efficiently measure impact after the intervention will significantly improve our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda on time. Going through the exercise of mapping SDG organizations, data, and target achievement is a powerful tool for doing so.

# MAPPING AND COVID-19

Succinct visual aids, such as maps or infographics, are powerful tools to influence decision-making and public engagement, as has been found in the COVID-19 global emergency. Organizations such as Reuter's Graphics and the World Health Organization (Fig. 9) have published interactive maps and dashboards that provide the latest COVID-19 infection and mortality rates, globally and by country on a daily basis. This allows governments, NGOs, businesses, and individuals to maintain an understandable, holistic view of how the virus is spreading, which guides them in their decision-making. The data that underlie these maps inform decisions related to the closure of public places and the implementation of social distancing measures. Having a visually compelling and comprehensible map also enhances public understanding of the state of the pandemic in their locality—this is critical if policies such as social distancing measures or the closure of businesses and events require public compliance.

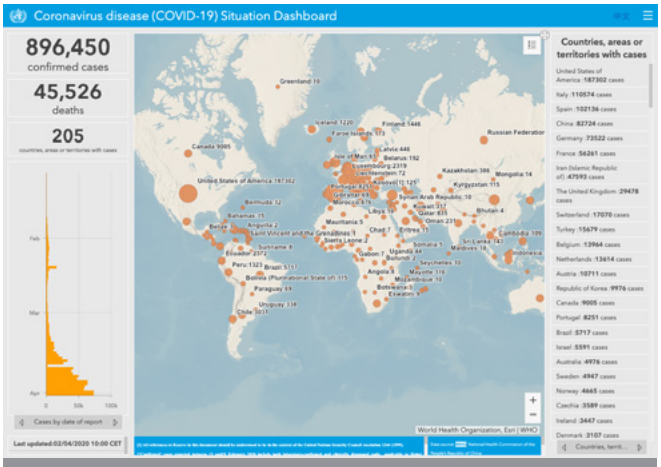



*Figure 9: The World Health Organization's COVID-19 Situation Dashboard (March 2020). An example of data visualized in a map that directly influences policy decisions.*[32]

The pace of response to the COVID-19 pandemic directly contributes to or detracts from achieving the 2030 Agenda. A delayed response to outbreaks around the world has already contributed to poor human health (SDG 3); reduced access to education due to school closures (SDG 4); caused negative economic growth and poor work prospects due to layoffs and closures of certain sectors of the economy (SDG 8); exacerbated socio-economic inequalities (SDG 10); and led to shifts in global supply chains (SDG 12).

A strong epidemic response relies on comprehensive mapping of a plethora of information spanning spatial scales to answer a multitude of questions. What is the demand for intensive care units, beds, and ventilators, and where can these things be supplied? Where is protective equipment being produced and how quickly can it be mobilized? Where are food and drug supply chains at risk of being cut off, and which suppliers, shipping companies, and other entities do we need to mobilize to keep them open? These questions arise like rapid fire and policy makers need strong systematic information maps in place to answer these questions and contain the crisis.

# CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

So far, evidence for the effectiveness of mapping to promote an accelerated 2030 Agenda is only anecdotal. More research is needed in this area: A systematic map or systematic review of evidence showing the causal relationship between mapping and SDG policy effectiveness might provide a stronger idea of how and where resources should be allocated to mapping initiatives.

Producing maps can be time and resource intensive. The exercise of producing a map from scratch typically requires an existing network that the mapper can reach out to for input, as well as cold-searching on Internet search engines. These activities are time-consuming and can run into data scarcity problems if searching is not done in a systematic way. Fortunately, as the examples outlined in this chapter have shown, there is a great deal of expertise and best practices both within and outside Canada that can be leveraged moving forward. Capacity-building, information-sharing, and financial resources for organizations wishing to undertake mapping are all necessary for achieving this.

Mapping must be incorporated into countries' follow-up and review mechanisms. The 2030 Agenda encourages UN Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven".[33] The key word in this mandate is inclusive—while countries (in most cases, federal governments) are expected to lead the charge in reporting on SDG progress, NGOs, academia, industry, and civil society typically offer the strongest goal-specific expertise for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Experts can provide succinct recommendations to policy makers. However, if these policy makers are not even aware of the network of expertise available to them, they will miss an opportunity to make the best decision possible, thus detracting from progress on SDG targets. Governments leading 2030 Agenda efforts must comprehensively identify ecosystems of expertise in order to achieve the SDGs in a thorough and timely fashion.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mapping should be added as an Action in the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy* in order to strengthen policy coherence, cross-departmental coordination (among federal ministries working on the Goals), and multi-stakeholder collaboration (including NGOs, industry, academia, and other aspects of civil society).
- Canada's federal SDG unit should harness the potential for ecosystem maps to provide critical information on the landscape of effort and expertise across Canada to meet the 2030 Agenda and to identify which experts should be consulted during the implementation, follow-up, and review processes.
- Statistics Canada should develop an SDG data portal using a systematic ecosystem mapping approach, following the methodology proposed by Van den Homberg and Susha[34] that was summarized in this chapter. This will ensure an organized and comprehensive collection of potential indicator data sources from which the SDG unit, with the help of experts, may choose the most reliable and comprehensive data possible.
- Canada's federal SDG unit or a research partner should conduct quantitative network analysis of all Canada-specific SDG targets and indicators following the methodology summarized in the quantitative mapping section of this chapter. This will provide an understanding of which targets have the potential to co-achieve others, thus providing evidence for the allocation of resources towards targets for efficiency under time and resource constraints.
- Research should be undertaken to investigate whether a direct causal relationship exists between undertaking mapping exercises and enhanced success and efficiency of policy interventions.
- Entities working on the SDGs should continue to engage groups with specific mapping skill sets, including statisticians, graphic designers, and information technology specialists.

# ENDNOTES

1 Keila Stark is a Research Assistant at BCCIC and a doctoral student in the Biodiversity Research Centre at the University of British Columbia.

2 The methodology for this chapter included three interviews with individuals from NGOs and civil society with mapping experience to highlight detailed examples of mapping initiatives. Interviewees were selected through purposive sampling. Interviews were conducted over the phone, with informed consent that findings would be included in the chapter. Interviews were not recorded. For background information on the theory behind ecosystem mapping, we consulted peer-reviewed literature (journal articles) and NGO grey literature. Sources were retrieved through the Web of Science search engine, using the search string: TS = (mapping AND SDG). The examples presented in the chapter were drawn from the peer-reviewed or NGO grey literature and/or based on the recommendations of interviewees. Validation of the research findings was conducted through triangulation of multiple sources (cited in the chapter) as well as peer review of the final text.

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# CHAPTER 2: SCALES AND LOCALIZATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

*Written by Nora Sahatciu and Laurel Wayne-Nixon[1]*

# ABSTRACT

Working across scales to achieve Agenda 2030 requires collaboration amongst multiple levels of government. This chapter discusses the horizontal and vertical coordination that is required for successful implementation of the SDGs globally, nationally and sub-nationally by referring to examples of actors, who are effectively, inclusively and collaboratively working across scales on the implementation of the SDGs in Canada. It will also identify lessons learnt from localization processes in Canada and will conclude with key recommendations on how the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy* should accelerate Actions pertaining to federal and sub-national collaboration.


# INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, the UN Secretary-General stated that his highest priority for this year is to address the looming threats of the 21st century. He referred to these threats as the "four horsemen"[2] who represent geopolitical tensions, climate crisis, global mistrust caused by rising inequalities, and the dark side of technology. At this point in time, it was hard to foresee that only a few weeks later humankind would be facing the devastating effects of a new pandemic, COVID-19. The challenges that the world is facing demands political leadership that can accelerate transformative actions across national, regional, and local levels. Without the whole-of-society approach, the "integrated and indivisible, global and universally applicable" nature of the SDG targets cannot be achieved.[3]

*Caption: BCCIC's first SDG roundtable in Kelowna in 2016*
*Source: BCCIC*

The SDGs challenge all sectors to break out of silos, to coordinate and connect across different government departments and levels of government, "and to find the spaces in between where issues intersect and collaboration is essential..."[4] In structural terms, without working across scales and levels (horizontally and vertically) it would be impossible to achieve Agenda 2030. This chapter will provide examples of actors working across scales on the implementation of the SDGs at sub-national levels in Canada. Referring to specific examples of localization, it will highlight challenges and opportunities when working across scales and conclude with key recommendations from experts on the way forward.[5]

## Defining scales

Working across scales has been identified in policies and reports as an important aspect of creating an enabling environment for sustainable development. However, the way that scales are used or understood varies widely in the literature. Therefore, it is necessary to identify a common set of terminology understandable to all. A common language is particularly important to enable the collection of relevant knowledge, stimulate multisectoral conversations, and reduce the creation of unnecessary silos, which may add barriers to an already complex SDG path.

The terms 'scales', 'levels', and 'layers' are often used interchangeably, although they have different meanings. For instance, the term 'scale' is used as a numerical attribute, associated with the 'scoring' of measures for interlinkages that "benefit, disable or reinforce influence" the SDGs.[6] These dimensions are determined by physical units (meters, years, or other quantities) and can be used for information filtering. In other cases, the term 'scale' is used as a "measure of extent, span, size, reach or detail", while the term 'level' is described as a "characterisation of perceived influence."[7] In contrast, some refer to a 'geography of scales' to explain the spatially-related interactions which, by their location, affect access to services and level of capacities that infuse or diffuse vulnerabilities and inequality.[8] The term 'scales' is also used to describe the "space where collective action for inclusive decision and interaction must happen".[9]

In this chapter, the term can be understood in the context of interactions across structural levels of administration, governance, or a society, where integration, policy alignment, and monitoring of actions for the SDGs must be implemented. We will pay attention to various administrative layers where interactions should happen collaboratively (horizontally and vertically) to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

## Importance of working across scales

The UN Handbook on VNR provides principal guidelines for the actions needed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. The VNRs are a tool to present progress and gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda, through comparable targets and indicators across countries. The principles for follow-up and review must capture all levels (scales) and must be substantive and knowledge-based, as well as open, inclusive, participatory, and transparent for all people, with a particular focus on the poorest, most marginalized and underrepresented, and those furthest behind.[10]

The need to work across scales has also been reflected in the SDG targets and indicators on partnerships, including 17.6 (*On enhancing North-South, South-South, and triangular regional and international cooperation*); SDG 17.16 (*On enhancing global and multi-stakeholder partnerships that can support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in particular developing countries, and across countries at the national levels*); and SDG 17.18 (*On enhancing capacity-building support on national statistics for developing countries, least developed countries, and small island developing States*).[11] Hence, working across scales is fundamental to the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Further, there are practical reasons for working across scales. One of the challenges encountered when implementing the SDGs is the need to "create inclusive decision spaces for stakeholder interaction".[12] This is a collective action or coordination problem, involving multiple actors across multiple sectors and jurisdictional levels, with divergent and often conflicting interests.[13] For instance, SDG 7 refers to "access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all". It includes working with different governance structures, ensuring 'affordability' through the economic and tax system, and ensuring 'reliability,' which is a technical and political process that requires willingness as much as capacity for it to happen.[14] Only governance capabilities that are integrative, collaborative, and that go beyond business as-usual can lead to progress on SDG 7 and promote transformational change in a society.

Working across scales also improves the management of spillover effects and minimizes trade-offs (See Chapter 4). One of the ways to navigate this is through 'nexus thinking' or the creation of synergies and interconnected interventions across SDGs, such as that applied on water, food, and energy production across levels of governance.[15] The nexus approach allows for

"networking to take place around common themes that can happen locally when next door communities talk about their common needs and leverage each other's work to scale up jointly."[16]

Accountability is also enhanced by working across scales and sectors. As an intergovernmental system, the UN is only able to track the progress of sovereign Member States by reviewing Voluntary National Reports (VNRs).[17] However, at the national level, citizens and opposition leaders can demand accountability of their national governments. Sub-national governments have a role to play in holding not only national governments to account, but also other sub-national entities. Other stakeholders across social, economic, public and private sectors have a role to play in ensuring that governments fulfill their commitments to the 2030 Agenda but they should also be held accountable for their role in promoting sustainable development. For instance, the private sector must abide by laws and regulations in the countries in which they operate, so their impact in part depends on governments establishing sound policies and regulations at national and sub-national levels, and an effective judiciary to deliver positive development impacts.[18]

*BCCIC youth delegation speaking to the SDG Unit about the progress that needs to be made on the SDGs. (Source: Laurel Wayne-Nixon)*

# WORKING ACROSS SCALES TO DEVELOP CANADA'S NATIONAL STRATEGY

Working across scales has been highlighted in the interim document entitled *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*. The creation of this document was led by the SDG Unit, supported by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and other government and non-government institutions and associations at different levels. In 2019 the federal SDG unit in Canada mobilized funding for organizations and the government to undergo consultations across Canada to reach a range of stakeholders, paying special attention to marginalized and underrepresented groups. More than 40 community consultations were conducted while drafting the interim strategy.[19] During these consultations Canadians stated that the SDGs cannot be achieved in silos. Progress requires policies and actions that "promote leadership at all levels, including at the federal government, the provinces and territories, municipalities and national Indigenous organizations."[20]

Collaborative and inclusive in its creation, the interim strategy and its 30 Actions explicitly include calls to "foster collaboration with communities, cities and municipalities"; "integrate strategies, policies and programs across federal departments and agencies"; and "enable horizontal partnerships and collaboration that promote the sharing of best practices, ideas and experiences relating to the 2030 Agenda" (Actions 2, 3, 7, 9, 11).[21] Action 26 explicitly talks about enhancing collaboration between different levels of "government, the private and non-profit sectors and research communities," and the "development of new and innovative partnerships, approaches and breakthroughs to advance multiple SDGs."[22] The SDG Unit is also responsible for ensuring policy coherence across government structures in Canada. This includes working with Statistics Canada and other departments on the development of a Canadian Indicator Framework and reporting on achievements and gaps towards the 2030 Agenda to Canadians locally and internationally.[23]

The SDG Unit considers partnerships and coordination with provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments critical to ensuring that implementation is informed by local priorities and a whole-of society

approach.[24] This is particularly important in Canada, since many of the SDGs and targets fall within provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions. Ensuring that policies, plans, programs, capacities, and initiatives at all levels are coordinated and aligned can help link the global agenda to local communities and their priorities on the ground. In Canada, the perception of guidance and leadership for promoting localization has been contradictory.[25] Experts argue that the federal (national) government's role should be that of normative and policy guidance as well as a creator of sustainable funding mechanisms, while provincial and municipal governments should be connectors and enablers of policies that are shaped by connecting communities with the federal government. As argued by an SDG expert, "Communities should create their requests through petitioning the provincial government on issues that matter to them. SDG implementation is very much a relationship process requiring trust at all levels."[26]

*BCCIC side event at the HLPF 2019 looking at Canada's progress on Agenda 2030 and Intergenerational Equity (Source: Laurel Wayne-Nixon)*

Until recently, coordination between different government levels in their implementation of Agenda 2030 in Canada has been lacking. We are now seeing progress at the federal level and there have been some isolated examples of local governments who have taken SDG implementation on as well. At the provincial level there has been little-to-no movement on the SDGs at all. This failure demonstrates a need for the federal government to create a mechanism to work with the provinces and territories on the SDGs. At the end of the day, the Canadian federal government signed on to the SDGs—not any other level of government. This means that coordination of the 2030 Agenda lies in its hands. Although it is impossible for the federal government to implement the Sustainable Development Goals alone, it bears responsibility for supporting all other levels of government in their implementation. As explained in the BCCIC policy brief entitled *Localizing the 2030 Agenda in Canada*, "While implementing the 2030 Agenda is primarily the responsibility of national governments, partnership and coordination with provincial, territorial, municipal and indigenous governments are critical to ensuring that implementation is informed by local priorities and solutions and makes use of a whole-of-society approach."[27]

# LOCALIZATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Localization is the process of provinces, regions, cities, communities and municipalities implementing the SDGs in a way that aligns with their priorities. Localization of the 2030 Agenda is a key component of scaling up progress on the SDGs. As mentioned earlier, the national government has a responsibility to coordinate implementation, but it is essential that all levels of government localize the SDGs for the Agenda to be successfully implemented at all scales. This is particularly important for Canada, because many of the SDGs fall within the jurisdiction of sub-national governments.

## Innovative and promising practice

The Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments has assembled a team of experts at the HLPF 2018 to address challenges and gaps to localization and how to address those in the shortest time possible. The UN Partnerships Platform established the 'Achieving SDGs – One City at the Time' initiative to mobilize and support municipalities in the local implementation of the SDGs and to monitor their progress by means of a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) through five proposed stages:

1. **Engaging,** for connecting people across scales through interactive actions such as Gaia Education and UNESCO GAP's educational tool, SDG Flashcards and the associated Training of Multipliers[28] to ensure their effective use;
2. **Vertical Integration,** whereby cities' aspirations for increasing prosperity, promoting social inclusion, and enhancing resilience and environmental sustainability are captured in the existing political agenda in virtually every city. Connecting existing planning frameworks with national development priorities and the SDGs can strengthen development outcomes and provide additional resources for local governments.
3. **Measuring what Matters,** through creating trackable targets and indicators for the relevant SDG targets. This means focusing on targets that can be shaped by public policies and activities led by municipal leaders when sustainable development issues occur within urban contexts.
4. **Producing a VLR,** where cities define divisions or units within the municipality that are responsible for the overall coordination of the VLR, estimate the costs of carrying out and writing the review, and identify possible sources of funding.
5. **Mainstreaming,** means informing everyone about the relevance and usefulness of the SDGs, by engaging the communications department, identifying stories and champions, and broadcasting them. Ultimately, the initiative should identify and raise an interest in collaboration with other cities and share best practices.[29]

## Canadian Examples

There are many promising examples of localization around the world and in Canada. One of the most important processes of localizing the SDGs is priority alignment, a process through which sub-national governments align their priorities with the SDGs. Every region has different needs and priorities based on its geographical location and the socio-economic make-up of its community members. Localization at the municipal level is a marriage of many related themes in Canada: the housing crisis, built infrastructure, and decent work. A common framework and language for the SDGs could help align priorities across these themes, as is being undertaken by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.[30]

### *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is the Canadian national voice of local governments for more than 2000 municipalities across the country. The FCM promotes the SDGs through the use of social media, knowledge platforms, and the FCM newsletter. FCM has also played a role in drawing attention to the importance of SDG localization and its links with many of the issues addressed by its members. FCM also explicitly supports using the SDGs as a tool for monitoring development assistance in all of its international initiatives.[31]

FCM works on enhanced communication and strengthened relationships between First Nation and municipal governments, initially through the Land management program in 2005, then with the First Nations-Municipal Community Infrastructure Partnership Program and the Community Economic Development Initiative (EDI).[32] The EDI promotes reconciliation, collaboration and the recognition of common values and goals. It also strives to create a stronger, united voice for engaging across scales including with businesses and other levels of government. Participants have increased their ability to access funding from other levels of government, lowered costs of providing services due to higher efficiencies and less duplication, and have opened up more opportunities for local business development and other initiatives that were not possible on their own.[33]

The FCM, through its Green Municipal Fund[34] (GMF) project, supports Community Efficiency Financing. GMF's mandate is to generate more reliable renewable energy, particularly for residential homes. Utility on-bill financing, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), and Local Improvement Charge (LIC) financing are just some examples of financing models used by municipalities delivering residential energy programming. In collaboration with the GMF team and the Government of Canada, they aim to: reduce GHG emissions; create energy savings and contribute to positive climate adaptation, water conservation, and health and safety outcomes; accelerate energy cost savings; improve housing affordability and keep the local economy moving; and increase home comfort, health, and quality of life for residents.

FCM has partnered with Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Canada) on an initiative known as the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, which involves 350 participating municipalities working across Canada to reduce levels of Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The program consists of a five-step Milestone Framework that guides participants to take action against climate change by reducing emissions in municipalities. The FCM supports municipalities to move through the Milestone Framework,[35] which includes steps for making lasting and environmentally sustainable changes at a municipal level. The five steps include baselines for inventory emissions, target setting, planning, implementation, and monitoring progress.

### *Kelowna SDG Scorecard Project*

In Canada, several municipalities, including those of Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and New Westminster, have expressly aligned their strategic plans with the SDGs.[36] In doing so, they have placed considerable emphasis on alleviating poverty. There are plans to do this alignment in many other cities and communities across the country with support from non-government organizations. There are some useful examples of organizations and municipalities in Canada who have taken this planning even further by actively implementing the 2030 Agenda and monitoring progress against localized indicators, including the City of Winnipeg and the City of Kelowna. This section will describe the ongoing process of localization in the City of Kelowna.

In 2015, BCCIC began a series of roundtables and travelled to communities around the province to help community members, local governments, and

organizations draw a connection between the work they do and the Sustainable Development Goals.[37] Most of the attendees came into the roundtables with little awareness of how their work contributed to the 2030 Agenda. In many cases, organizations and residents were working on the Sustainable Development Goals but did not have the knowledge or means for collaboration.[38] It was from this series of roundtables that the Movement Map was born and interest was generated in the City of Kelowna to create an SDG scorecard. The Movement Map shows 11,333 organizations across Canada and the specific SDGs and targets they are working on.[39]

In collaboration with the Pacific Institute for Climate solutions, BCCIC began to work with the City of Kelowna to create an SDG scorecard. An SDG scorecard depicts how a community is progressing on the Sustainable Development Goals through localized alignment with SDG indicators and data. This process began by reviewing strategies, policies, and other city documents to identify existing targets and indicators within local-level plans. Such a review is a crucial component of localization as sub-national governments and communities are often making progress towards the SDGs without knowing it. There is no use in re-doing work that is already done, which makes this alignment and review process important for localization.

After identifying the existing targets and strategies that aligned with the SDGs, the partners identified the gaps that existed and decided on which global indicators are not applicable at the local level. Agenda 2030 was created with targets and indicators that are applicable to predominantly national governments. This means that there are targets and indicators that inherently do not make sense to localize.[40] After removing the inapplicable targets and indicators, decisions had to be made about how to fill the remaining gaps. These decisions were based on a number of factors including data availability, local priorities, and comparability.[41]

Considering the time intensive nature of alignment and analysis, all efforts were made to select data that was easily accessible. The team also wanted to set up a process to ensure the scorecard could be updated in the future to demonstrate implementation progress over time. After the City of Kelowna decided upon which targets and indicators to focus on and include in the scorecard, the data analysis process was initiated. This included aligning chosen targets and indicators with available municipal, regional, provincial, national, and non-government data. Currently the analysis stage is in progress.[42]

The project has encouraged collaboration amongst the main partners but also with provincial governments, CSOs, academic institutions, the private sector, and the regional district. These stakeholders have been actively involved in the entire process, from data collection to analysis, review, and expert input. This project has encouraged multi-stakeholder partnerships, which are essential for the successful implementation of Agenda 2030 at multiple scales. The review of policy gaps has also stimulated policy development in much-needed areas. However, one of the lessons learned is that the time- and labour-intensive nature of this process should be considered in advance. It takes time to review all municipal policies, strategies, and documents and ensure their alignment with relevant SDG targets and indicators. Another challenge has been the extra time required for meaningful partnership and collaboration—it inherently takes longer to make decisions when multiple stakeholders are involved. Since all the data are not housed in one institution, it has required immense coordination and communication to find and secure this data.[43]

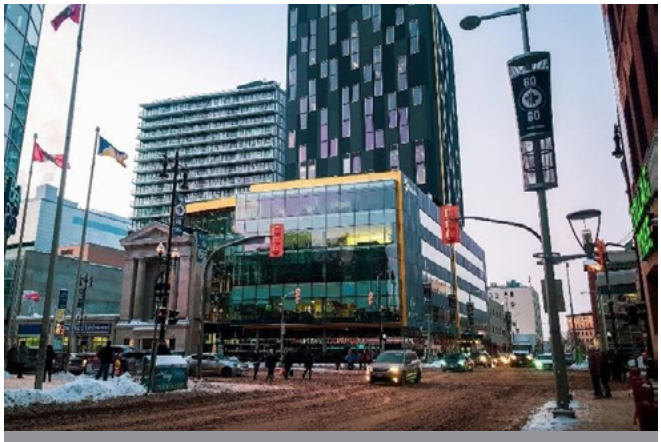
*City of Kelowna (Source: Jeffrey Eisen on Unsplash https://unsplash.com)*

In addition to the SDG Scorecard, through the BCCIC roundtables and BCCIC's local chapter, Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan (GECCO), there have been successful efforts to raise awareness about the SDGs in the community.[44] Although alignment at the local government level is important, it is also important to enhance SDG knowledge and understanding among local residents. If they see the added value of the process of alignment they can hold their local government accountable for making progress on the SDGs. In order to raise awareness and

promote global citizenship, large community events were organized around the SDGs. These included a Sustainable Development Challenge and the annual Volunteer Fair. The former is "open to all students in the Central Okanagan in grades 8-12. The goal is to expose our city's youth to the UN's 17 Global Goals and to provide a platform for them to act on at least one of them. By partnering student teams with a locally based NGO, they will create an innovative solution that addresses a problem."[45] The latter aligns volunteer opportunities with the SDGs to promote global citizenship.[46] These community events are crucial to successful localization as they allow individuals to see the work that they are currently doing within the framework of the goals.

### *Winnipeg—The Peg*

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, a report named *2019 OUR CITY, A Peg Report on Winnipeg and the Sustainable Development Goals* was recently released.[47] *The Peg*, Winnipeg's online platform, demonstrates how this city has incorporated the SDGs and aligned 60+ indicators with the global goals. Key highlights from the report include Median Household Income (18.4% increase since 2015), Average House Price (increase 52.8% since 2008), and Education Attainment (increase of Winnipeggers with university certificates from 19.4 to 26.1%; drop in Winnipeggers with no high school diploma from 23.1 to 16.9%).[48] The Peg has also developed guidance documents on how to create a voluntary local review (VLR), when the community is ready to undergo the process.



*Winnipeg, Manitoba (Source: Rajabali Jawadali on Unsplash https://unsplash.com)*

Although the local integration of SDGs has not reached all municipalities in Canada, there are some municipalities deeply engaged in the implementation of the SDGs such as Kelowna, Winnipeg, and others.[49] These examples can provide lessons for other municipalities seeking to implement Agenda 2030 at the local level. Municipalities have no official mandate to take on the implementation of the SDGs. Nevertheless, in Canada, civil society organizations generally agree that a grassroots approach is the only way to increase the pace of progress on SDG implementation. [50]

Every segment of society should be able to contribute to the advancement of the SDGs. While governments have primary responsibility for coordinating, monitoring, and implementing the 2030 Agenda, other partners should be invited to support policy coherence for coordination and progress across the SDGs. Coordinated governance arrangements, which are supported by multi-sector programs, are crucial to ensuring that priorities that support human health and wellbeing are led in a nexus approach. Canada still has a great deal of work to do in terms of translating talk into action at all levels of government. Progress has been hindered as a result of limited networking, information sharing, and coordination. According to Waterloo Global Science Initiative (WGSI,) it is much easier to create a floor for conversations with a smaller group of people at a community level than it is with the provincial or federal levels.[51]

# CASE STUDY
# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

**Prepared by:** Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (Jenica Ng-Cornish, Courtney Vaugeois, Graham Sakaki, and Pam Shaw) March 2020

## Background

With nations worldwide striving to meet the 17 UN SDGs by 2030, Vancouver Island University (VIU) is undertaking a study to investigate what role an educational institution can play to help Canada achieve the SDGs. The project is a collaboration between VIU's Office of the President and Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI), a research institute located at VIU's Nanaimo campus that aligns its research goals with the university's pillars of sustainability. This study has two primary objectives, namely to examine what VIU is doing to currently meet the SDGs, and to develop a list of recommendations that will assist the University in directing its efforts to continue to meet the SDGs in the future.

*Photo supplied by Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI)*

## Adapting the global agenda to a university community

Since 2018, MABRRI has been engaged with the VIU community to determine how the existing work of individuals, departments, faculties, and university services might be accelerating progress toward the SDGs not only at VIU, but also within local communities. The MABRRI research team extensively examined VIU through a total of 86 meetings with a wide range of faculty and staff, a comprehensive review of VIU's website, analysis of other university initiatives, and several community engagement events. Through this process, VIU's education and research foci, services, infrastructure, and community engagement initiatives were examined, allowing this project to take a whole-of-university approach and support the Leave No One Behind principle. This approach has also demonstrated that achieving the different components of each SDG requires incorporating various types of work across multiple scales. For example, the ways in

*Figure 1: Methods through which VIU has achieved components of Goals 4, 5, and 6.*

which VIU is doing work towards SDGs 4, 5, and 6 varies by addressing different targets and indicators within these goals through different university initiatives (Fig. 1).

In particular, Goal 4's targets include ensuring equal access for all persons to primary, secondary, and tertiary education, upgrading educational facilities to provide inclusive and effective learning environments for all, and increasing the supply of qualified teachers.[52] For this study, understanding how VIU is achieving this wide range of targets required researchers to evaluate the work being done across different scales within the institution. Smaller scale initiatives such as departmental projects help to ensure that youth have access to effective learning opportunities and larger scale initiatives such as infrastructure upgrades help provide access to the VIU campus for all.

As much as possible, this project has adapted the UN's global agenda to the university scale. Not all SDG targets and indicators are directly applicable to a university; however, they still require consideration as the university may have different means of achieving them. Many of the targets and indicators were adapted to the university level based on the data collected within the community, in order to measure the progress and contribution that the university is making in relation to the SDGs. For example, VIU is strongly committed to reconciliation and Indigenous engagement, which is not specifically addressed in the UN agenda, but researchers gathered so much information on VIU's work on these issues that it was necessary to find a way to fit it into existing indicators.

## Localizing the SDGs at VIU

VIU is a teaching university with a strong connection to the local community. The institution's education and outreach commitments provide an opportunity to encourage acceleration of the SDGs. A variety of projects and initiatives that build partnerships between VIU and the surrounding community address challenges that community organizations are facing, while also providing VIU students and employees with meaningful experience. For example, the Regional Initiatives Fund at VIU provides communities on Vancouver Island with the opportunity to collaborate with VIU students and faculty through applied research projects. Projects funded through this program, to name just a few, have addressed issues such as regional air and water

quality, BC's opioid overdose crisis, the feasibility of alternative energy, fish habitat restoration, and promoting healthy lifestyles for youth. Collaborative work and applied research projects such as these offer an important starting point for laddering opportunities at VIU. In this sense, laddering provides local and regional initiatives with the potential to grow to a larger scale, involving further collaboration and additional stakeholders.

Findings of the study have also revealed that a wide variety of faculty members choose to discuss topics relevant to the SDGs in the classroom with students, as well as implement projects and assignments that engage students in sustainability initiatives. Additionally, due to VIU's smaller size, the campus community is closely connected and this study has gone a long way in raising awareness of the SDGs across campus through a variety of interactive presentations, information booths, social media campaigns, and public community engagement events.

*Photo supplied by Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI)*

*Photo supplied by Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI)*

# COORDINATION, SCALES, AND COVID-19

When the entire world has mobilized against a pandemic, collaboration at different scales of governance and administration appears to be a *modus operandi*. Governance is one of the main challenges, as decision-makers at global, national, and local (sub-national) levels struggle to address health emergencies and introduce new prevention measures as a highest priority. Governments must do this while ensuring that economic losses are addressed and political powers and peace are not jeopardized.[53] This means that the social, economic, environmental, and political areas of the SDGs that reinforce each other should be prioritized.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, an example of vertical and horizontal coordination across Canada can be seen with the recent whole-of-government response to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. A Special Advisory Committee has been established at the Federal level to advise the Deputy Ministers of Health on the coordination, public health policy, and technical aspects of this outbreak. This group includes members of the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network Council and the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health. The Public Health Agency of Canada is working at various scales with partners domestically and globally, including with the World Health Organization (WHO), to respond to this outbreak. Sub-nationally, Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) is working on reversing chain reactions and conducting tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19 from clinical specimens. The NML is also working collaboratively with Canadian provincial public health laboratories making sure additional testing capacity across multiple scales is available.[54]

Coordination of actions on the recent pandemic is a testament to collaborative work across scales for addressing health issues under SDG 3 with consideration to interlinkages between the goals. For instance, Target 3.3 aims to reduce global infectious disease risk alongside Target 3.d on strengthening prevention strategies to identify early warning signals. Implementation of SDG 3 also depends on SDG 16, "effective and accountable institutions at all levels, with efforts to put an end to violence and conflict, as well as to strengthen resilience against all hazards".[55] Globally and nationally, governments have mobilised together against the "invisible enemy" to help each other contain the spread. The pandemic emergency may have induced a much faster shifting of our behaviours than decades of work at an institutional level. After this crisis subsides, Canada's public servants should not go all the way back to normal. They should be empowered to continue embracing uncertainty, learning through experimentation, and continuing to work more collaboratively across sectors and jurisdictions to bring different perspectives to the table.[56]

Implementing the health dimensions of the SDGs will require strengthening national health systems, improving laws and regulations to protect people and the natural environment from harmful substances, and increasing investment in health as well as infrastructure that supports health and well-being. This includes sustainable urban design and planning, and policies that mainstream health concerns from the local city and workplace level to the global scale.[57] At a global level, this includes preventing and preparing for large epidemics, engaging in multi-stakeholder alliances to tackle antimicrobial resistance, and preparing for the health impacts of climate change.

*After this crisis subsides, Canada's public servants should not go all the way back to normal. They should be empowered to continue embracing uncertainty, learning through experimentation, and continuing to work more collaboratively across sectors and jurisdictions to bring different perspectives to the table.*

# CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the chapter we noted that horizontal and vertical governance interactions can produce positive or negative impacts on the SDGs. Along the same lines, limited motivation, lack of practical guidance on working across sectors and creating multi-stakeholder partnerships, and inadequate financing of projects on interlinkages are further challenges that need to be overcome to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030.

The Brookings Institute reports in 2017 and 2019 observed that Canada still remains behind other countries in implementing the SDGs.[58] The findings from Canada's Commissioner on the Environment and Sustainable Development (who audited Canada's preparedness to implement the SDGs) were taken forward to inform the interim national strategy.[59] Yet, the government is lagging behind, both on accelerated actions within Canada, and on providing support to other countries. Although national consultations for the design of the Strategy for SDGs were convened, there were limited local consultations and engagements taking place.[60] The SDG Unit's Interim SDG strategy is now in place, but functional governance structures for SDG implementation, monitoring, and reporting on progress based on data systems is lagging behind.

The 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) report[61] identified inadequate governance structures across global, regional, national, and local levels as one of many challenges to stimulating interlinkages for achieving SDGs. Implementation plans should consider varying levels of capacity, access to resources, and funding opportunities at each level. Local governments are key, not only for implementing SDGs, but also for shaping policies for a more efficient delivery of programs and services to their citizens.[62] The SDG Unit states that local governments can achieve progress on sustainable communities through integrated planning, housing, sustainable transport, inclusive urbanization, waste management, and inclusive, green public spaces.

Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) provides a means for bringing together national governments, international players, civil society, and other actors along various scales to accelerate progress on the SDGs. Working across scales is one of the most important means for implementing SDGs in an inclusive, trust-building, and sustainable way. Although collaboration is happening at different levels, more work is needed. At the end, we have to work more now to be able to celebrate in 2030. It took a few years for us to figure out the ingredients for the recipe of the SDGs, now the recipe should be present at every level of government—across all scales.

*Photo supplied by Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI)*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Federal government should provide mechanisms, guidance, and funding to Canadian municipalities to establish a direct line to their constituents in order to create and enhance trusting and functional working relationships. Communities should aggregate needs and petition them to the municipality and through them to the provincial government, demanding their needs are met and rights are realized within a social, economic, and human rights framework.
- Establish or enhance engagement mechanisms that are open, accessible, safe, and inclusive of all groups, particularly Indigenous populations.
- Strategic coordination requires effective communication across scales, which is central for public engagement efforts. As argued by an SDG expert, "Sometimes government's relations at Federal and Provincial levels are not at the same level of unison thus passing mixed messages which do not contribute to building trust to accelerate the achievement of SDGs."[63] For more effective multi-stakeholder engagement across scales in Canada, the federal government must ensure that engagement occurs in both official languages, through online and offline formats, and with in-person engagements held throughout Canadian regions, urban centres, rural areas, and especially northern communities.[64] Open communication, transparency, and inclusivity can stimulate better policy planning and implementation.
- At local levels, mainstream health concerns from city planning and health and safety in workplaces to the global scale, prevent and prepare for large epidemics, engage in multi-stakeholder alliances for protection of health, and prepare for health impacts of pandemics and climate change.
- Seek international peer review of published strategies, following the example of the German Council for Sustainable Development.[65] A peer review would enable learning from others and facilitate sharing examples in areas where Canada leads, for example, sharing the process by which the national strategy on SDGs was designed would be of interest to many.
- Efficiently utilize communication channels between the SDG Unit and civil society, particularly across multiple governance layers to ensure coherence and coordination through capacity building, use of enhanced technologies, and utilization of reliable data.

# ENDNOTES

1 Nora Sahatciu is a development practitioner and a philanthropist who has worked in sustainable development in many countries including in Canada, Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro. In recent years, Nora served as the Head of the UN Coordination Team in the UN Kosovo Team. Laurel Wayne-Nixon is BCCIC's office manager and head of partnership development. She has written and researched more than five policy briefs on SDG implementation in Canada and is the BCCIC lead on the Kelowna Scorecarding Project.

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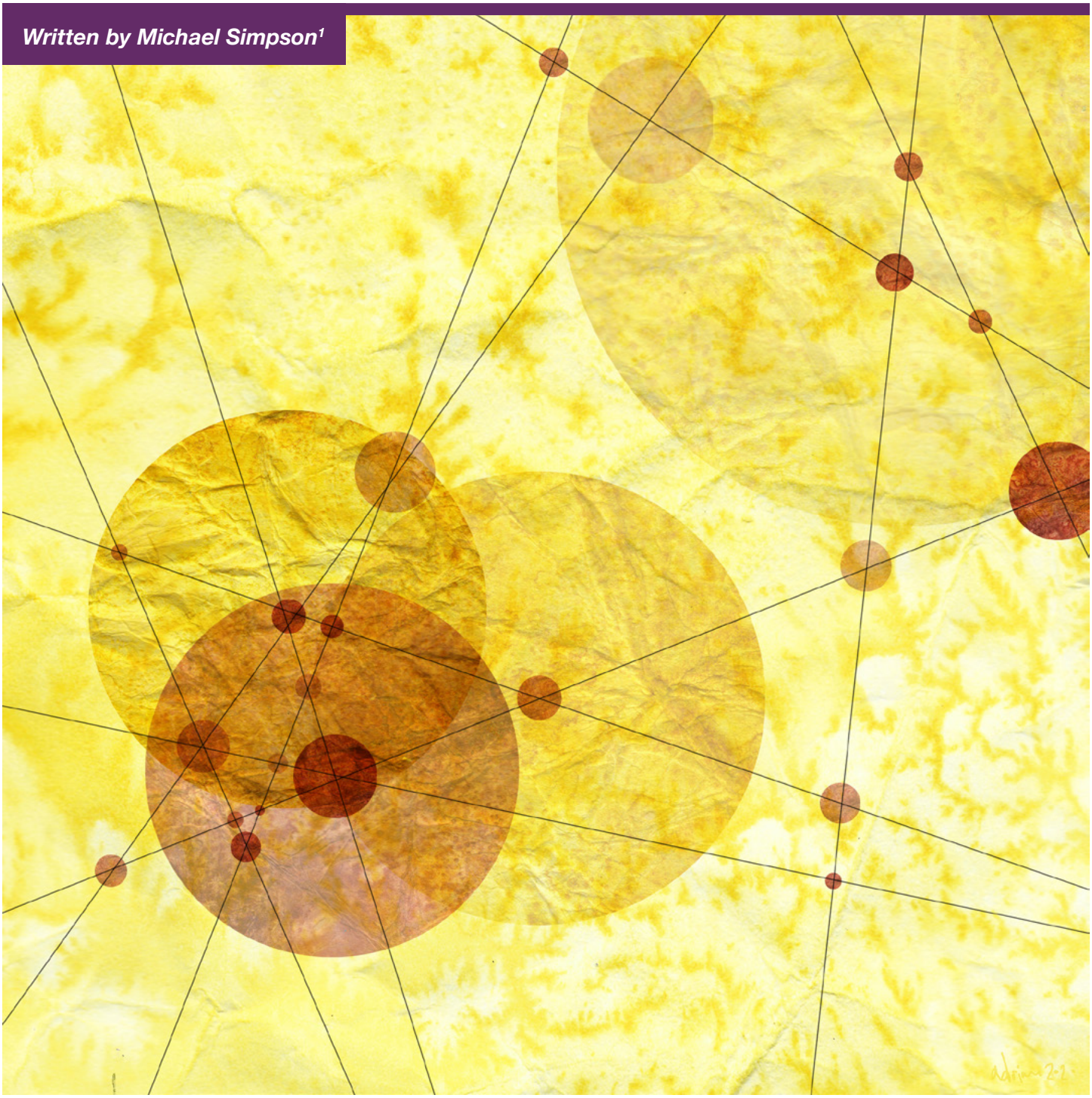
# CHAPTER 3: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACHES IN A CANADIAN CONTEXT

*Written by Michael Simpson*[1]



# ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the rationale for multi-stakeholder engagement in a Canadian context to accelerate action on the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It discusses the nature of wicked problem solving in the context of a Canadian identity of multiculturalism, pluralism, and inclusion. Referencing the COVID-19 pandemic as an example, it explores the rationale at the multilateral scale for a multicultural approach, how this approach has been used in British Columbia in the past, and why it promises innovative leaps in generating uniquely Canadian solutions. Utilizing Integral Theory and holarchy, multi-stakeholder engagement is considered in relation to social phenomenon processes that lay the effective foundations for transformative, inclusive solutions best suited to the "leave no one behind" agenda. It also provides recommendations on how to apply a multi-stakeholder approach at scale, in a Canadian context.


# INTRODUCTION

On December 20, 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution entitled, *Towards Global Partnerships: A Principle-Based Approach to Enhanced Cooperation Between The United Nations and All Relevant Partners*. This resolution emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships: "the resources, knowledge and ingenuity of all relevant stakeholders will be important in mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, complementing the efforts of Governments and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in developing countries."[2] It went on to highlight the requirements of effective partnerships—consensual and voluntary relationships; participation of stakeholders from public and non-public sectors; an agreement to collaborate on a common purpose or specific task; and a mutually agreed sharing of risks, responsibilities, resources, and benefits.

According to Wade Hoxtel of the Global Public Policy Institute, three factors that have driven recent inquiries at the United Nations on the efficacy of multi-stakeholder partnerships are the sheer number of increasing partnerships, the reputational risk and legitimacy of partnerships, and the overall transparency regarding partnerships, including sources of funding.[3] These factors resulted in an ECOSOC General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/224 to hold "a discussion on the best practices and ways to improve, inter alia, transparency, accountability and sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and on review and monitoring of these partnerships, inter alia, the role of Member States in review and monitoring."[4]

This chapter is a short examination of multi-stakeholder bodies, engagement, and governance in Canada, and outlines a potential theory of change that applies to our national implementation strategy for the 2030 Agenda. It also provides recommendations on how to apply a multi-stakeholder approach at scale in a Canadian context.

*BCCIC staff mapping SDG interlinkages with stakeholders in British Columbia, Canada (Source: Rowen Siemens).*

## Key terms

- *Multiculturalism (MC)* defines an equitable approach to our different physical and cultural identities and is a core Canadian value.
- *Multi-stakeholder approach or engagement process:* a methodology of consultation or engagement with a "stakeholder(s)" who has a given interest in an issue. It requires the inclusive participation of stakeholders to solve shared problems or challenges. It often includes the full spectrum of diversity of stakeholders for the given issue, which in the case of something as broad as the SDGs, results in a "whole-of-society" approach.
- *Multi-stakeholder dialogue:* formalized discussion in an engagement process to exchange ideas and perspectives as well as to form new and emergent solutions.
- *Multi-stakeholder platform:* a forum or body which brings together various stakeholders to address common concerns. When stakeholders come together in platforms, they have multi-stakeholder dialogues.
- *Multi-stakeholder body (MSB):* the sum total of multi-stakeholders and the facilitators of an engagement process involved in an engagement process whether or not it is formalized.
- *Multi-stakeholder governance model:* the actual decision-making power of a multi-stakeholder body (MSB) to make governance decisions and the mechanisms of carrying out that governance (e.g., advisory body vs legislative mandate).[5]

# THE CONTEXT: SHARED NECESSITY OUT OF WICKED PROBLEMS

In September 2019, the Secretary-General of the United Nations called for "accelerated action" to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[6] We have a decade left. It was an "Urgent Call to Action" frustrated by slow progress on many fronts. Despite the promise of the 2030 Agenda globally, we were not progressing on many key targets, nor were we on schedule. Action was called for on three levels, namely:

> *"**global action** to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals; **local action** embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and **people action**, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations."*[7]

It was an exciting yet daunting call for a global shift, even before the COVID-19 global pandemic struck. According to the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) working paper entitled "Estimates of the Impact of COVID-19 on Poverty" (May 2020), this tiny virus has the potential to set us back 30 years on eradicating extreme poverty and plunge half a billion people into poverty—effectively sending us backwards on SDG 1 (No Poverty).[8] The virus has exposed our current vulnerability and lack of sufficient social, economic, or environmental resilience. The economic forecast by the Head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with all of its SDG implications, looks bleak, claiming we are heading into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.[9] Equally worrying, global food security, our second SDG Goal, is a growing concern. In the words of David Beasley, the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), "We are on the brink of a global hunger pandemic".[10]

Everywhere, it seems we are searching for solutions to an increasingly complex challenge. Yet, within the fearsome horizons of this crisis, blue skies have emerged over Beijing, the air in Los Angeles is cleaner, and the carbon-emitting air corridors of jet travel are largely silent. In many parts of the world, including most of Canada, people are connected through a shared Internet, while simultaneously isolating in their homes, tending to children and wondering about the elusive nature of 'normal'.[11] COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, with all of its Agenda 2030 implications, is an *outstanding example* of the need for multi-stakeholder engagement and governance when it comes to this decade's challenges. At the heart of the praxis of multi-stakeholder engagement lies a unique theory of change, albeit an evolving and emerging one, that is uniquely suited to the Canadian identity.

In Eastern and Western thinking, a variety of problem-solving methods have existed, from the Socratic debate, to the Hegelian dialectic or even a deep faith in the singular authority of the Divine. Much depends on time and place, including the most recent 500 years of largely rational thinking, which has been matched by an explosion in our population and empirical knowledge. But what happens when we try to come together as a planet of diverse views, cultures, contexts, and historical philosophies in the year 2020 to solve a mutual problem such as COVID-19, or the SDGs, or both? We have 17 goals, 169 targets, 193 countries and a myriad of opinions and perspectives in a situation where time is of the essence.[12] Do we debate the solutions, use evidence-based methodologies, appeal to emotions through Twitter, or simply force our opinion through campaigns or political tyranny?

Our global discourse is landing us exactly where we find ourselves… in need of a united purpose in the face of a common challenge such as COVID-19 or the SDGs, but with very diverse views. Multi-stakeholder processes allow for critical debates and can offer constructive, innovative yet realistic pathways forward that garner the attention of those with the political power to create change. This is exactly why multi-stakeholder engagement, multi-stakeholder bodies, and multi-stakeholder governance are keys to success.

Tackling the SDGs is very much about transcending, but including our anthropocentric habits, including our reliance on binaries. Multi-stakeholder engagement is about moving from 'either/or' to 'both/and' which is difficult in the face of partial truths. The Canadian government has convincingly asserted that we are 'together' in this time of crisis. We must 'unite' as a nation. We are a 'team'. Our medical health officers, on the other hand, are adamant we must stay apart. Doctors plead with us to avoid others, saying isolation is the answer. We must physically stay apart in our homes. Both perspectives hold a partial truth which together give us a holistic view. How do we come together by staying apart? To understand the answer requires holding multiple perspectives, sometimes using different cognitive abilities at the same time, and moving beyond the limitations of binary thinking. It can be summed up in the paradoxical ancient statement from the Heart Sutra that "form is emptiness and emptiness is form".[13] Meaning, to understand the statement requires an ability to hold partial truths that together make a greater whole.

*Multi-stakeholder engagement is about transcending but including perspectives. People may be talking about the same issues but seeing them very differently (Source: Michael Simpson).*

The SDGs require us to make 17 goals a singular priority in the same moment. A united horizon seen through the lens of more than 7.5 billion people with an equal number of perspectives on the same distant goals. While one person advocates for clean energy, another may champion jobs. Someone champions human rights, another the plight of our oceans, air, or land. Each has a different theory of change depending on their life experience and perspective. If they perceive their claims connected and each holds steadfast to

their opinion, we have a debate. Through a willingness to learn, to compromise, and to adjust perspectives they may reach a moment of common creativity or innovation in which a new solution emerges. Innovation is rarely something entirely new. Far more often it is built on the foundations of previous thinking or perspective. No party to the dialogue could reach this critical 'transformational thinking' alone. If they all come up with a livable solution, an aha moment, we have an emergent answer which often transcends but includes *all* of the perspectives. Multi-stakeholder engagement is about seeking this emergence at scale.

At the heart of achieving the sustainable development goals is this deep reliance on multiple views and 'wicked' problem solving. Wicked problems are described in an article by John C. Camillus in the *Harvard Business Review*: "Wickedness isn't a degree of difficulty. Wicked issues are different because traditional processes can't resolve them…Environmental degradation, terrorism and poverty—these are classic examples of wicked problems…. Not only do conventional processes fail to tackle wicked problems, but they may exacerbate situations by generating undesirable consequences."[14]

*Wicked problem solving assumes no one has the answer but collectively we can understand how to move forward (Source: Michael Simpson).*

While not everyone will agree on the problem or the solution, Camillus argues that the process of using social-planning techniques will allow for the emergence of a "shared understanding of the problem" based on a shared understanding of the different interpretations and positions taken by stakeholders in relation to this problem. From this shared understanding a "joint commitment to possible ways of resolving it" will emerge.[15] For wicked problem solving to effectively work through a process of multi-stakeholder engagement, each stakeholder must hold enough humility to understand that the solution is beyond the grasp of a single theory of change or perspective. The solution must transcend but include diverse perspectives in a greater whole. A successful process also requires the participants to trust that apparent and real short-term differences can be overcome, in favour of shared longer-term outcomes or impacts. Like models of conflict resolution, the model assumes that deep *values* are shared, if not the *position* of stakeholders or their view on particular issues.

Unlike a Socratic debate, negotiation, or litigation process, a multi-stakeholder process assumes an outcome is unknown. It is similar to a Hegelian dialectic in which the "the nature of the determinations themselves *drives* or *forces* them to pass into their opposites",[16] in the process "negating but preserving" themselves. A multi-stakeholder approach requires this shared sense of 'necessity', or humility in the face of a driving wicked problem, to cross-fertilize ideas and perspectives toward an emerging idea. The result is the birth of new and innovative creative solutions that satisfy multiple views. There is an emergent logic to the process, and indeed, what is more 'driving' and 'necessary' then the urgent nature of the SDGs that need to be solved in this decade, or the pandemic that threatens to set our social and economic achievements back by decades?

# MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN CANADA: 'NEW ANSWERS TO OLD PROBLEMS'

On the 8th of October 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced a policy of multiculturalism that distinguished Canada from the concept of a "melting pot" south of our border.[17] The United States and Canada share a history of immigration that has been marked by waves of diverse demographics and the long-standing presence of Indigenous Peoples. The success of Canadian multiculturalism remains a debate. Today our Canadian policy struggles onward in a Multiculturalism Day celebrated on June 27 every year. According to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, multiculturalism is

> *"at the heart of Canada's heritage and identity—and as Canadians, we recognize that our differences make us strong. Canada's strong tradition of multiculturalism has allowed our society to benefit from fresh perspectives and* ***find new answers to old problems.*** *It has also helped Canada attract some of the most innovative and entrepreneurial people from around the world, showing that openness is the engine of both* ***creativity*** *and prosperity."*[18]

A key justification for this pluralist national identity is the idea of "finding new answers to old problems" and the assertion that multiculturalism is an "engine" or driving force for creativity. Both are key elements in a unique Canadian Theory of Change (TOC) that have recently been complemented by the foregrounding of the role of women and girls when promoting our values through foreign policy in the Global Affairs Canada Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).[19] In the Canadian case of the SDGs, this TOC involves a potential broad spectrum of stakeholders at a variety of scales (municipal, provincial, national, and nation to nation with First Nations) with a distinct governance mechanism to institute or create a legal framework for decision-making.

The Canadian experience with multi-stakeholder governance is, like in many countries, an emerging model of good governance based in part on the international trend toward inclusivity promoted by the World Economic Forum Global Review Initiative,[20] the framework within the United Nations since 1992 of Major Groups,[21] the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development Type II Partnership model,[22] and the OECD work on Civil Society Partnerships.[23] The partnership model itself has been a core principle of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) policy in Canada since the inception of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and more recently it is enshrined in the CSO Partnership Policy of Global Affairs Canada (GAC).[24]

Sub-nationally, multi-stakeholder engagement has a significant history in British Columbia, and in some local cases it is a core methodology for consultation and planning purposes. For example, in the post-Rio Agenda 21 period of the 1990s, British Columbia instituted a process of Land and Resource Management

*The War in the Woods marked a period of multi-stakeholder engagement in British Columbia that eventually secured the greatest conservation gain for future generations in Canadian history (Source: Michael Simpson)*

Planning (LRMP) to engage multiple stakeholders in regional land use planning. It was a particularly volatile period in British Columbia's history because of a "war in the woods"[25] regarding the cutting of old growth forests and infringements of Indigenous land rights. The largest mass arrests in Canadian history had taken place and the governance of natural resources was in crisis. The LRMP process used a lengthy multi-stakeholder engagement approach to planning. The final planning document was then legally accepted or sanctioned by the Provincial Government. In some cases, it was not fully accepted. In many cases it was. However, the final governance decision on land use planning remained with the provincial government, effectively making the multi-stakeholder process an advisory one. Thus, it was not a pure model of multi-stakeholder governance.[26] However, because the inclusion of so many diverse stakeholders had local political implications, *most* of the LRMP conclusions were honored.[27]

The model was used quite successfully on a regional basis to bring a variety of stakeholders together, including industry, civil society groups, and local leaders (including First Nations), to discuss land use planning. The process often used geographic spatial mapping tools to discuss land use decisions. In an interesting and famous twist that started in the late 1990s, a select group of industry and environmental groups initiated their own multi-stakeholder process to negotiate directly with each other, before eventually including government, about a massive area of natural conservation habitat known as the Great Bear Rainforest.[28] This model was notable in that it temporarily took the government out of the driver's seat, in favour of a faster conflict resolution initiative. Eventually, it was signed off by the Premier.

In a strong critique of multi-stakeholder engagement, author Harris Gleckman cautions that this type of CSO/private sector engagement is often used as a form of consolidating corporate power: "Frustration with the inadequacies of governments—working bilaterally, regionally or multilaterally—has encouraged a number of civil society organizations (CSOs) to opt to 'negotiate' directly with the dominant multinational corporations (MNCs) affecting their issue and, when these 'negotiations' result in a joint programme, create institutional governance arrangements to implement the outcome."[29] However, in the case of the Great Bear Rainforest, the process, once it was sanctioned by the Provincial Government, culminated in the greatest conservation gain in Canadian history, effectively putting a stop to the war in the woods and reducing tensions throughout the province.

Arguably corporate power was reduced. The success of this multi-stakeholder engagement, which used ecosystem-based management principles, has left a lasting impression in British Columbia and influenced models of governance across the country and even in other parts of the world. The Canadian experience of multi-stakeholder engagement on forest conservation policy, including the use of mapping tools, was emulated as far away as Cross River State in Nigeria where similar gains in forest conservation were achieved, effectively shutting down forest exploitation across the entire state overnight by the State Governor in 2008.[30]

Federally, similar 'roundtables' have been used to effectively provide multi-stakeholder 'advice' to Ministers who retain the governance decision-making role. For 25 years, ending in 2013, Canada had a national Roundtable on the Environment that engaged a multi-stakeholder approach in response to the 1987 Bruntland Commission call for Sustainable Development.[31] Today, on issues of foreign policy, there are similar mechanisms for multi-stakeholder engagement, albeit they could be strengthened. For example, there is a Civil Society Policy Advisory Group (CPAG)[32] that is tasked with advising senior Director Generals within Global Affairs Canada on the implementation of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). The working group, which is made up of at least nine members of civil society from a spectrum of geographic locations across Canada, effectively partners with government to jointly develop and monitor the implementation of the national strategy. Although it has no formal decision-making power, the working group has, in effect, provided the core direction and written objectives for implementing the FIAP and is a leading example of a growing ethos of partnership. The group, to date, is unique in that it attempts to jointly create solutions rather than simply adopt a positional mode of negotiation.

Partnership, as the minimum type of multi-stakeholder approach, can be viewed as the common ground between two (at minimum) different identity structures. Partnership is not about these two (or more) differentiated socio-centric identities becoming the same through debate. Rather it can be seen as the process and outcome of engaging in dialogue to find common ground and leverage each other's strengths toward a common goal. It is for this reason that so

much effort has historically gone into establishing CSOs as effective "actors in their own right" and demanding this recognition. Because, historically, CSOs have been overshadowed or under-resourced or lack the power of governments, the argument has been advanced that government should 'enable' CSOs by providing funding, resources, or capacity development. At a minimum, CSOs have demanded political space to operate in a safe environment.

Discussions regarding partnership and partnership policies are marked by debate, negotiation, and compromise in which CSOs are often on the demanding side and government on the defensive or leadership side of the discussions. Times have changed. CSOs and other multi-stakeholders are clearly actors in their own rights and if the SDGs can be used as an example, are often the primary agents of change to whom governments turn for leadership, information, guidance, and capacity development. During the Ebola outbreak, it was clearly NGOs that were helping to lead the battle.[33] Today, the COVID-19 outbreak is being tackled on many fronts, with health care workers at the very frontlines, governments scrambling to understand the impacts of policy decisions, and researchers grappling with a quickly changing context. It is telling that one of the primary sources quoted for information globally on COVID-19 is coming from the Coronavirus Research Centre at Johns Hopkins University.[34]

Internationally Canada has also, at times, attempted to honour a whole-of-society approach when representing itself at the United Nations or international forums based on limited models of multi-stakeholder engagement. After Rio in 1992, Canada consistently included civil society and youth representatives on international delegations, including trade missions. During the period of Conservative rule, this practice ceased, but it has recently been reinvigorated by the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau. Through a strong directive in the mandate letters of most Ministers, Trudeau insists on multi-stakeholder engagement because "it is also your responsibility to substantively engage with Canadians, civil society and stakeholders, including businesses of all sizes, organized labour, the broader public sector and the not-for-profit and charitable sectors. You must be proactive in ensuring that a broad array of voices provides you with advice, in both official languages, from every region of the country."[35]

Canada also participates in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) which is based on four core principles: "Openness,

*Including the voices of youth and other stakeholders at international forums strengthens our ability to achieve the SDGs (Source: Michael Simpson).*

trust, mutual respect and learning lie at the core of effective partnerships, recognising the different and complementary roles of all actors."[36] As part of facilitating those effective partnerships Global Affairs Canada regularly convenes a multi-stakeholder group in Canada for advice.

In the case of the SDGs, there is a strong argument for a whole-of-society, multi-stakeholder approach. In a report on Canada's preparedness on the SDGs, prior to the release of the national implementation strategy, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development stated "Although the implementation will require engagement and participation from all levels of government, public and private sectors, Indigenous communities, academia, and all civil society, the federal government has a leadership role to play at the national and international levels."[37] A "whole-of-society" approach through multi-stakeholder engagement offers us the same insight and reward when it comes to the SDGs. Canada has specifically underlined a "whole-of-society" approach in our interim policy document, *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*:

> *"Achieving this agenda requires a whole-of-Canada effort…Across the country and around the globe, Canadians are already answering the call. From businesses acting in socially responsible and environmentally sustainable ways, to organizations making progress with gender equality, communities providing services to those most vulnerable and individuals opting for more locally sourced and sustainable products—everyone has a role to play and can contribute to moving the 2030 Agenda forward."*[38]

# THE SDG NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

*"Canada recognizes that multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. While many Canadians are already coming together and collaborating on the SDGs, more work can be done to support and leverage the work of stakeholders, including not-for-profit organizations, the provinces and territories, municipalities, academia, the private sector, Indigenous peoples, women, youth and under-represented and marginalized populations."*[39]

In order to put this into action, the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy* claims Canada will "establish a representative external advisory committee of experts to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Canada" (Action 14). To date, this advisory body has not been formalized. However, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the lead Ministry that houses the SDG unit, has taken steps to initiate a process. Unlike legislation or 'hard law', ratifying the SDGs or proposing a multi-stakeholder advisory body appears to be a guiding, voluntary initiative. It remains unclear whether the Canadian interim strategy[40] is a binding document. It appears to take a "soft law" approach, which, like the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals is not legally binding. Consequently, there are no repercussions if the policy is not followed.

It is important in light of Canada's international agreements to frame the interim strategy in the context of the Istanbul Principles,[41] Agenda 2030 itself, the Grand Bargain,[42] the Paris Declaration,[43] recent climate change agreements, and other pertinent policy documents so that the strategy builds on and refines our existing legal commitments. It is equally important that we differentiate between our legal obligations, such as the reporting requirements of our Federal Sustainable Development Strategy[44] or our annual Parliamentary obligations on Overseas Development Assistance,[45] and our more lofty but unenforceable good intentions. Policy should harmonize upwards and the SDGs, in theory, are the highest-level planning document which other multilateral, national, sub-national, or local policies must meet or exceed.

It is encouraging that the interim national SDG strategy envisions a return to "diverse representation at the United Nations High-Level Political Forums from all levels of government, including the provinces and territories, Indigenous governments and peoples, communities, municipalities and cities."[46] It falls short, however, of promising a true multi-stakeholder mechanism at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), such as the creation of a joint Voluntary National Review as is the case in Finland or a shared multi-stakeholder body such as in Kenya or Ghana. The strategy does, however, commit to "leverage opportunities at key international and regional events and forums like the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the G7 and G20 summits and the OECD to share best practices for implementing the 2030 Agenda, showcase Canada's efforts and collaborate with other countries to increase the impact of the SDGs and help build momentum."[47]

This collaboration requires peer-to-peer learning among nations. In February 2020, an international effort was launched in Bogota, Colombia, to establish a Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies.[48] A working group on 'Strengthening of National Advisory Bodies for Sustainable Development: Governance for Successful National Advisory Bodies' was formed. This working group conceptualized a research project to inform the assessment of and support rendered to advisory bodies for sustainable development. Under the leadership of the newly constituted Steering Committee, the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC), in partnership with the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), is spearheading a research project. This research will provide evidence-informed recommendations that can be used to strengthen the governance of advisory bodies and coalitions in order to trigger accelerated and transformative actions for Sustainable Development.

We can also learn from the national experiences of other countries. Germany, for example, used a multi-stakeholder process to find a joint solution to the exit of coal from their economy—dubbed the Coal Commission. Today, Germany is seeking a solution through multi-stakeholder engagement that is focused on a specific, and challenging, end result. Namely, to find an agreed upon pathway for the achievement of all food-related indicators leading to Agenda 2030.[49]

The final task or mandate of a multi-stakeholder engagement process significantly shapes the focus and outcome. There are many examples from Canada and around the world that reveal the deep structure of multi-stakeholder engagement. On the surface they appear to address completely different subjects but the structure, function, and principles involved in these examples reveal a perennial pattern.

# PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHIES OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

All successful multi-stakeholder solutions have a common deep structure that includes a shared need and a willingness to search together for an emergent solution. In his seminal 1967 book *The Ghost in the Machine*, philosopher Arthur Koestler[50] named this evolutionary unfolding process a "holarchy" which he sharply contrasted with a "hierarchy". A holarchy has since been described by pundit Ken Wilber as having 20 principles or tenets.[51] Simply put, a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Combine two hydrogen atoms and an oxygen atom, and we don't just have three atoms, we have a molecule of water that has a 'function' none of the atoms could achieve alone. It has a deeper function or greater significance, while still relying on its constituent parts.

Certain unique combinations result in leaps of function or new 'holons'. A multi-stakeholder outcome may go far beyond the sum of opinions of the participants. The 'creative' engine referenced by Trudeau about multiculturalism results from finding these unique combinations of opinion that are articulated in solutions that transcend but *include* the individual opinions. Key to this is an inclusive approach that engages stakeholders on the most marginalized end of the leave no one behind (LNOB) spectrum in line with the transformative 2030 Agenda.[52]

Wilber nuances this by noting that social discourses have a "dominant mode" or "centre of gravity," which can lift individuals to a "predominant mode of mutual resonance," because social holons are not limited by the same stages as individual or physical holons. Humans are not just atoms. We can mutually rise to the occasion, surpass our individual potentials, and find creative, emergent 'functionally' new solutions.[53]

Key to understanding how the tenets of holarchy apply to multi-stakeholder groups is recognizing that the nature of a solutions-oriented discussion on the SDGs is not based on the *physical* characteristics of the people involved. Instead, it is based on the dominant mode of discourse, which is a *social* phenomenon. The process also requires inclusivity, not dominance of a singular view, to reach this higher function. The most vulnerable and marginalized groups are best suited to articulate their experience, inclusive of those most left behind. This is key to a 'deep' solution. This "mode of discourse" can reach much deeper stages and result in emergent solutions that go far beyond what individual thought patterns might ever hope to achieve. Wilber asserts that the "structure of this discourse is basically following the structure of the dominant monad (from the Greek for unit) of the individuals who run the social discourse in the social holon."[54] This is a key insight. Just as the perspectives of the LNOB demographic must be included, so do we need gifted facilitators who come from a globally oriented understanding or point of view.

In simpler terms, a multi-stakeholder group will basically rise to the occasion of a well-facilitated meeting and discuss issues, to the best of its abilities, at the depth of the discourse of the leader's core direction (centre of gravity) of the discussion. This is also dependent on a concept called "self as instrument," which essentially posits that the individual stage of development of a particular leadership style determines the centre of

gravity of a discourse, just as a particularly talented jazz musician can steer the written score of music to tighter and more creative levels of musical accomplishment with her peers. In the case of the SDGs, the minimum depth of the global discourse is based on the deeper values of mutual survival for the widest spectrum of beings. It is a depth that resonates across cultures, religions, and political views that most individuals in a multi-stakeholder discourse should be able to intuit and effectively participate in. Similar to Huxley's reference to a religious "perennial philosophy",[55] the SDGs and their underlying principles reference what we might call a Perennial Sustainable Development Philosophy. Understanding how we can hold partial truths at the same time is a core argument of Wilber's Integral Theory, which provides a detailed map of how this psycho-social terrain can be explained.

The experience of the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation when conducting multi-stakeholder roundtables at the community scale confirms that the vast majority of participants can see this 'higher resonance' of the larger 'invisible mosaic'[56] of people globally who are concerned about Agenda 2030. They will rise to the occasion of a well-facilitated discussion that goes deeper and wider than the interests of their communities or stakeholder views if the leadership of the group holds this higher resonance or social discourse. Wilber also articulates what constitutes depth or a "higher moral resonance" when it comes to care structures or moral intuition. In his writings on the "basic moral intuition,"[57] he posits that these deeper moral care structures embrace and care for the widest span of perspectives possible to the greatest depth possible. Thus, to be moral, discussions or solutions must transcend and include or embrace the perspectives of the widest span, including that of other species and across time (i.e., future generations). Recent work to include these perspectives through formal legal mechanisms such as a Future Generations Commissioner in Wales,[58] or having spokespeople for the legal personhood of Land and Rivers in New Zealand[59] are intriguing attempts to formalize this morality across species and time.

This greater holarchy, or wider embrace of perspectives across time and species, also helps to clarify how the globally desired "transformative" nature of Agenda 2030 might work. It is the combination of the 17 goals and 169 targets, a recognition of their interlinked nature, and the principles of their interaction (such as leaving no one behind) that makes the sum of the parts into a greater whole. Leaving no one behind taken to its logical conclusion would include future generations and other sentient beings. Arrange the parts of a watch in the right order, with the right principles, and suddenly it can function differently. A watch can tell time, its parts cannot. The SDGs, ordered with, for example, a feminist, interlinked approach that leaves no one behind, socially or ecologically, has a higher order function to it. Unveiling these principles is most efficiently done through a multi-stakeholder social discourse at its widest embrace. One such attempt in Canada is exemplified by the "platform thinking" approach of Alliance 2030.

*Strong multi-stakeholder solutions attempt to understand the perspective of young people, future generations and even the "personhood" of rivers and mountains (Source: Michael Simpson).*

# ALLIANCE 2030

In 2017, the Community Foundations of Canada, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, and the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation officially launched a multi-stakeholder 'platform' as a Pan Canadian alliance of philanthropic foundations, businesses, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The platform was dubbed "Alliance 2030"[60] and drew heavily from an initiative celebrating the 150th birthday of Canada. Concurrently, a dialogue begun in 2016 was held between Price Waterhouse Coopers and BCCIC that focused on building a Type II initiative[61] between the private sector in Alberta and the SDG work of BCCIC. The discussions grew into an annual meeting dubbed Together 2018 that was first held in Calgary, Alberta, and continues today.

Unlike a coalition or a network, Alliance 2030 defines its *modus operandi* as that of an iterative platform. Platform thinking has most often been described in business theory and literature as the "operating system" through which initiatives (typically both hard and soft technology transfer) can be operationalized.[62] Often lacking a central authority, a platform is regulated more by the dynamic, iterative principles of engagement than the static power of authority or democratic representation. An analogy often used is the operating system of a phone that allows for a variety of applications and approaches, if the basic software coding is followed. In a similar way Alliance 2030 allows members to use the logo, images, and branding of the platform in the spirit of the core principles of the platform. There is, to date, no central coordinating body but rather a collection of dedicated representatives from a variety of geographic regions and backgrounds. The core DNA of the platform is built or understood to uphold progress on the SDGs in a Canadian context.[63] More than an organization or a network or even a coalition, a platform can also be a generative space lacking a hierarchy and embracing a wide variety of approaches, methodologies, and organizational structures. Platform thinking, albeit complex and difficult at times to govern, has tremendous potential seen from a holarchic or Integral perspective. Understanding multi-stakeholder approaches and Alliance 2030 through an Integral lens that considers internal and external, individual and collective dimensions, allows us to make key recommendations for a uniquely Pan Canadian approach that includes government based on the lessons learned about MSB internationally.

# CONCLUSION

Multi-stakeholder approaches, although varied, always address the core elements of wicked problem solving. These include working toward an unknown solution and using a variety of perspectives to transform toward a greater whole, while holding a common set of core values. Solutions often hold more complexity and benefit a greater span of life forms at a deeper level. Depths, for example, that include longer spans of time, even including future generations. COVID-19 is a compelling and current example of the need for multi-stakeholder thinking that lends itself well as an inspiration for adopting this methodology and approach toward Agenda 2030. Alliance 2030 as a leading platform in Canada is ideally suited (if paired with an official decision-making mechanism) for true multi-stakeholder governance on the SDGs in Canada. To apply this vision to the implementation of our national SDG strategy, Canada would need to adopt key recommendations on multi-stakeholder engagement, potentially including criteria that are internationally recognized as best practices by multilateral forums.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Inclusivity:* A practical guide on coalition-building notes that coalitions (or in the Canadian case platforms) are more effective when local communities can play a role in governance: "Affected communities are not only represented by but are leading the coalition".[64] It argues that in order to be effective, coalitions must be inclusive and embrace diversity and gender equality. It recommends that translators and cross-cultural interlocutors, who have cultural and social capital, should play a role within coalition governance structures and working groups to establish trust and facilitate communication among members.[65] Inclusivity implies that solutions are shared across a spectrum of stakeholders.
- *Agree on common values and principles:* In the preparation phase, collectively agree on values, principles, or core beliefs that will enable members to set aside their competing interests and viewpoints and focus on specific deeper target objectives and principles.[66] At a minimum, coalitions should make a firm commitment to the core values and principles of Agenda 2030, which include diversity, inclusiveness, 'leave no one behind', and protecting nature as is expressed clearly in a Terms of Reference for Alliance 2030, which all member organizations are required to sign and abide by.[67]
- *Strengthen leadership:* An OSCE practical guide on coalition-building describes how to strengthen leadership and governance. Roles and responsibilities should be clear for members, working groups, committees, and other sub-groups. For example, Steering Committee roles could include coordination of member activities, managing administrative activities, serving as a centralized communication source and securing or providing expertise and resources. Decision-making processes should be agreed upon at the outset (i.e., majority rule vote, hard or soft consensus). The leadership style should be carefully considered. The psycho-social research of Susanne Cook Greuter on stages of leadership or leadership "action logics" describes in detail the nature of mature leadership styles and relative advantages to each.[68] Best practice suggests that promoting ownership among members is also effective; in other words, "a collaborative leader will be inclusive and promote diversity, share power, resolve conflicts, communicate clearly, look at the big picture and facilitate group interaction".[69] Meetings involving all coalition members should be scheduled regularly so that important decisions can be made collectively. Agendas and minutes should always be clear and set (with input from members) in advance.
- *Conflict management:* Shared goals and targets are not enough to ensure the maintenance and sustainability of coalitions. Coalitions also need 'communication bridges' and conflict-management strategies to promote cooperation and constructive dialogue among members.[70] For example, the Food Security Coalition in Canada used a combination of feminist approaches, consensus building, and peace circles to find common ground between the disparate groups within the coalition.[71]
- *Leveraging the interlinkages:* A policy paper on multi-stakeholder platforms emphasizes the importance of developing holistic systems-thinking strategies to respond to the complex, interdependent nature of the SDGs. These strategies should (a) encourage multiple stakeholders within a system to interact and co-develop complementary strategies, (b) consider the boundaries and overlapped areas across scales and borders, (c) encourage

integrated multi-sectoral and cross-sector partnerships and solutions, and (d) direct resources to reaching the most marginalized, which includes ensuring that the most marginalized are included in the platform's goals and ensuring that they have been engaged with from the outset.[72] In other words, let the SDGs themselves inform the structure and approach taken by coalitions. Fundamentally, integration should define coalition strategies and efforts should be made to identify linkages to different parts of Agenda 2030 to design or redesign the way that coalitions are governed and operate.

- *Leave no one behind:* Ensure that the leave no one behind principle is included in the coalition's goals, that funding is allocated for disaggregated data that provides information about the needs of the most marginalized, and that the most underrepresented and marginalized are represented in multi-sectoral coalitions.[73] Inclusivity and non-discrimination should be fundamental principles guiding coalition governance and operations.[74]
- *Partnerships with civil society and communities:* Coalitions are more effective when they work together with civil society and communities most affected by an issue. By cooperating with CSOs, coalitions can better represent civil society within the 2030 Agenda framework and can help implement effective sustainable development policies.[75]
- *Encourage diverse stakeholder participation:* Lessons can be learnt from Coalition 2030, which included international and domestic civil society organizations and focused on a range of issues from environmental sustainability to humanitarian relief and youth rights.[76]
- *Explore governance models:* In the inception phase, coalitions should explore different top-down and bottom-up multi-stakeholder governance models that help or hinder different voices from coming to the fore.[77] The number of stakeholders is also a critical consideration for effective engagement, which in practical terms should rarely exceed 12-15 participants in total. Relying on participants who represent sectors (i.e., networks, coalitions, associations) is one way to resolve this limitation.

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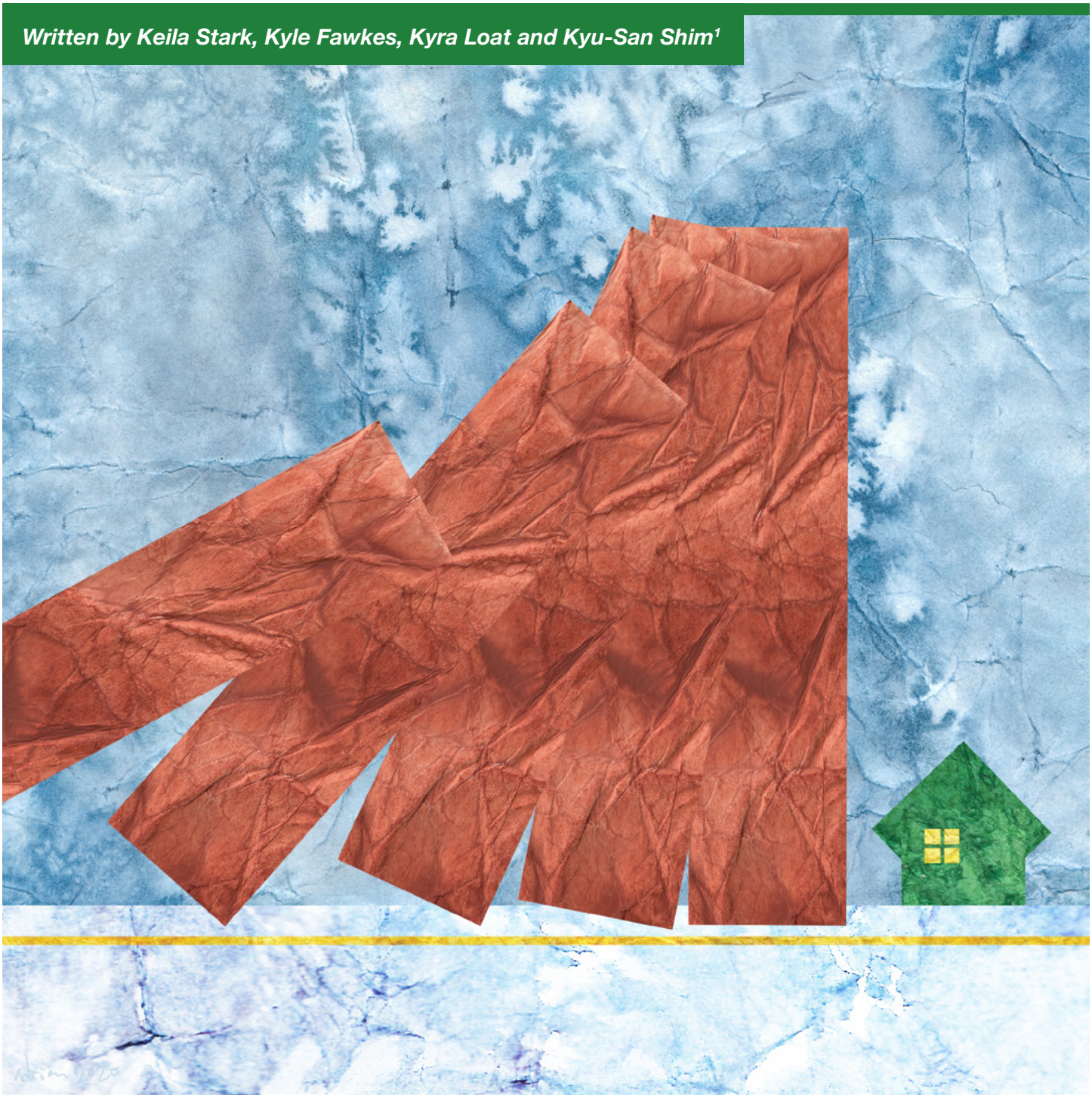
# CHAPTER 4: SPILLOVER EFFECTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

*Written by Keila Stark, Kyle Fawkes, Kyra Loat and Kyu-San Shim*[1]



# ABSTRACT

Spillover effects refer to the consequences of a particular action (such as the trade of a good or service) on a seemingly unrelated area elsewhere. They are related to externalities in economics: the costs or benefits experienced as a consequence of a particular sector that are not captured in market prices, and therefore are not "internalized" by producers or consumers. In our highly globalized and interdependent world where people, goods, capital, technologies, and resources flow across borders, it is well-understood that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals within a community, region or country can positively or negatively impact the achievement of the Goals elsewhere. This chapter discusses the typology of spillover effects as they apply to the 2030 Agenda, methods for quantifying spillovers, and a way forward for incorporating spillovers into SDG policy decision-making.


# INTRODUCTION

In our highly globalized and interdependent world where people, goods, capital, technologies, and resources flow across borders, it is a given that actions taken within a sovereign state may have positive or negative impacts elsewhere. These "spillover effects" can be compared to the concept of externalities in economics: the costs or benefits experienced as a consequence of a particular sector that are not captured in market prices and therefore are not internalized by producers or consumers. For example, the negative climate impacts of greenhouse gas emissions from tropical deforestation are generally not quantified in the price of lumber. For this reason, interventions aimed at attenuating spillover effects usually attempt to "internalize" or assign an economic value to these otherwise unquantified impacts (for example, by introducing a carbon tax). Because the SDGs are deeply interconnected and involve different sectors and actors across the globe, spillover effects have recently gained traction as a way of quantifying the achievement of the Goals.[2]

At the global scale, the observed pattern of spillover effects is fairly intuitive. It is generally known that countries with the highest GDP have greater spillover effects in the environmental, economic, social, and security domains. In the 2019 Sustainable Development Report, Canada had a spillover index of 77.9 (where 0 was "best" or low spillover effect, and 100 was "worst" or high spillover effect).[3] Given the knowledge that negative spillovers tend to flow from richer to poorer countries, governments must integrate measures to address spillover effects into decision-making to reduce inequities within communities and between countries.

Although the concept of spillover effect has only gained traction in the SDG discourse in recent years, it has latently existed since the proliferation of globalization itself. Wars, financial crises, and pandemics have rippled across the globe with implications for the health and livelihoods of the global population. At the time of writing this report, the COVID-19 pandemic is a pertinent example. While spillovers are associated with the movement of goods, money, or pollution across borders, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the high flux of *people* across and within country borders can also have serious impacts on the entire global community.

The zoonotic virus[4] is widely thought to have been initially transmitted to humans through the handling of wildlife for purchase at the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, China. The right of people to travel freely across borders and continents was the direct cause of COVID-19 reaching pandemic status. Likewise, efforts to contain the spread of the virus wreaked havoc on the global economy by disrupting trade-dependent supply chains, reducing the demand for international travel, creating financial hardships for workers in various sectors, and making essential services (hospitals, grocery stores, pharmacies, transit) high-risk jobs overnight. In sum, the exploitative relationship of human beings with wildlife (detracts from achieving SDG 15) resulted in the proliferation of a deadly disease (detracts from SDG 3), which in turn had major negative spillover effects on global economic growth, employment rates (SDG 8), and financial security in families (SDG 1); access to education due to school closures (SDG 4); and increased risk of domestic violence due to stay-at-home orders (SDG 5).

*The movement of goods, services, money, people, and pollution around the globe can have positive or negative impacts on the achievement of the SDGs (Source: Kyle Ryan on Unsplash https://unsplash.com/photos/pSyfecRCBQA)*

Spillover effects can also be observed in the COVID-19 mortality risk experienced across different populations. Exposure to higher air pollution in areas such as India and Northern Italy have been shown to place individuals at higher mortality risk from the disease, possibly due to compromised lungs. Similarly, communities without access to clean, running water and sanitation (SDG 6), which also tend to experience higher poverty levels (SDG 1), are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. A person's occupation determines the ability to work from home or risk exposure to the virus on the job (SDG 8). Many in insecure low income jobs have experienced layoffs. These pollution-, sanitation-, and occupation-related risk factors result in health spillovers that exacerbate economic and social inequalities (SDG 10). A controversial positive spillover effect of the pandemic has been the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 13) and harmful particulate matter in the air as a result of reduced transportation and manufacturing. For example, in India harmful nitrous oxide pollution levels dropped by approximately 70% after only a week of COVID-19 lockdown measures.[5]

This illustrative example clearly demonstrates the inextricable linkages between spillover effects and the SDGs. This chapter outlines the main types of spillover effects, examples of spillovers in the Canadian context, methods for quantifying spillovers, and mechanisms to address spillovers when developing SDG policies. As we set our sights on achieving the SDGs by 2030, we must bring spillover effects into policy discussions to ensure no one gets left behind.[6]

# TYPOLOGY OF SPILLOVERS

Spillover effects are traditionally thought to manifest in the international trade of goods and services, through the extraction and/or use of global common goods (i.e., the atmosphere, the high seas), or through the generation and proliferation of public goods (unlimited, non-rivalrous goods such as knowledge or innovation). The spillover effects arising from these activities have been categorized by Schmidt-Traub and colleagues[7] into four main spillover classes: environmental, socioeconomic, finance/trade/governance, and security spillovers, each of which are described in the following section.

It is important to note that this spillover typology uses terminology based on the activity that generated the spillover; the impact experienced may be in a different domain. For example, pollution from manufacturing (SDG 7) is classified as an environmental spillover but also has health consequences (SDG 3). Spillover effects do not exclusively refer to the trade of goods and services; more intangible things such as quality education and women's empowerment can have spillover effects across all of the goals, such as improved health, less violence, and better socioeconomic outcomes for marginalized groups.

*Environmental spillovers:* The trade of goods and services across international borders is inextricably linked to the environment through the use of natural resources (SDGs 14 and 15) and the generation of waste and pollution (SDGs 12 and 13). Environmental spillovers can occur through the anthropogenic trade of natural resources, such as deforestation in one country for timber trade with another, or through the natural transboundary flow of air, water, and biological resources (e.g., airborne pollutants and migratory fish stocks).

*Socioeconomic spillovers:* These refer to socioeconomic impacts that are not captured in the value of goods and services. A good example of this is labour standards: corporations and consumers benefit from importing cheap goods that were produced in countries with less protective labour standards, or few protections against

child and forced labour (SDG 8). Occupational hazards experienced by these workers can cause acute and chronic health problems (SDG 3)[8] and low wages make it challenging for families to break the poverty cycle (SDGs 1 and 2).

*Finance and governance spillovers:* These spillover effects pertain to the international flow of capital, and the rules and institutions that govern these flows. International capital flows that contribute to this type of spillover include aid, foreign direct investment, and taxation of multinational corporations. One positive example is Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is critical for lower-income countries' achievement of the SDGs.[9] Not only do the funds from ODA directly finance particular interventions (for example, investing in women's reproductive health initiatives in developing countries), the spillovers from ODA can be far-reaching and long-lasting, producing intangible benefits such as enabling women to attain higher education (SDG 4) and thereby assist their families to break out of the poverty cycle (SDG 2) and achieve better health and overall quality of life (SDG 3). Conversely, the use of tax havens, shifting profits and assets to avoid taxation, and money laundering all have negative spillovers by reducing the ability of countries to raise public resources to help achieve the SDGs.[10]

*Security spillovers:* These spillovers refer to externalities associated with the arms trade, international organized crime, and violent conflict within and between countries, and therefore directly pertain to the targets under SDG 16 (Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions), as well as other targets under other goals that pertain to violence. Negative security spillovers extend far beyond the value of the arms trade, including enhanced safety risks and long-term trauma in conflict areas. For example, sex work and gender-based violence is often associated with development project worker camps in remote areas.[11]

# INTERNATIONAL SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF CANADIAN ACTIVITIES

We now shift the discussion from higher-level concepts to concrete examples of spillover effects. This section showcases three case studies demonstrating how activities undertaken within Canada can have pervasive impacts beyond our borders. These spillovers are not accounted for in the economic value generated from these activities, nor have they been accounted for in any SDG indicator assessments in Canada or in the other countries involved. The case studies were chosen to showcase different types of spillovers (environmental, socioeconomic, finance and governance, security) and the impacts on multiple SDGs.

# CASE STUDY 1:
# TRANSNATIONAL SPILLOVER EFFECTS FROM CANADA'S FISHERIES (SDG 14)

**Prepared by:** Kyle Fawkes, BCCIC Intern and UN Oceans Conference Delegation Co-coordinator

The realities of trade and fish stock migration ensure that national efforts to address fisheries management are tethered to environmental, social, and economic conditions across regional and global scales. Consequently, Canada's management actions will have implications for how other nations progress toward their own sustainable development objectives. As a developed nation, a major seafood exporter, and a large maritime state, it is crucial for Canada to identify and monitor these 'spillovers' to understand how fishery policies support or undermine global progress on the SDGs.

The transboundary migration patterns of many fish stocks make it impossible to support sustainable management through any single national fisheries plan. Most countries recognize the need for international cooperation on this front and support the work of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)[12] to oversee and align national approaches. Canada's involvement in six RFMOs suggests it is deeply committed to regional collaboration for fisheries management. Canada's amended Fisheries Act (2019) goes even further by explicitly respecting the importance of ecosystem health in fisheries management; in other words, the desired management approaches emphasize the integrity of whole ecosystems, as opposed to just the species that are targeted for harvest.[13]

Taken together, Canada's management strategies for the species that comprise migratory stocks would therefore have implications for how regional neighbours sustain their own fisheries. For instance, the North Pacific albacore tuna populations that support fisheries in Canada must also support fisheries across the Pacific basin, including Japan, US, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, China, Vanuatu, Tonga, Belize, Cook Islands, and Ecuador.[14] Restrictions on gear type and fishing season length in the Canadian albacore fisheries would contribute to the reliability and sustainability of stocks and ultimately assist other Pacific states in managing their own albacore fisheries. American salmon fisheries might also see similar benefits from area closures, license restrictions, and enforcement mechanisms within Canadian salmon fisheries. From an ecosystem approach, these fisheries management strategies would also affect the ability of neighboring countries to restore the ecological health of their marine spaces under SDG target 14.2. In addition, there would be further social and economic implications for the communities that rely on migratory stocks and the ecosystems that they support. Sustainable interventions in Canada could therefore contribute to economic opportunities for Small Island Developing States and least developed countries under SDG target 14.7, economic growth (target 8.1), the promotion of food security (target 2.1), and the eradication of poverty (target 1.1).

However, the reciprocal is also true; unsustainable fisheries management within Canadian waters has the potential to restrict sustainable development efforts internationally. Unsustainable fishing practices in Canada's distant water fleet could also undermine the

development efforts of neighboring coastal nations by illegitimately taking marine resources or destroying the habitats that they rely upon. Yet, the direct sale of sustainably caught fish to these coastal nations provides positive economic output from distant water fleets. Acknowledging that Canada is the 8th largest fisheries exporter in the world, managing sustainable fisheries within Canada could also support foreign business efforts to 'adopt sustainable practices' when they purchase Canadian seafood. Sustainably fished Canadian stocks are currently promoted by seafood certifications such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Ocean Wise seafood.

Understanding and quantifying Canada's transboundary fisheries impacts will provide a more holistic picture of its contributions to sustainable development. Responding to negative spillovers will position Canada as a world leader in progressing the global sustainable development agenda.

*Albacore tuna in the Steveston fish market, Richmond BC. The Pacific albacore tuna populations that support Canada's albacore fishery also support fisheries in other countries including Japan, US, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, China, Vanuatu, Tonga, Belize, Cook Islands, and Ecuador (Source: Roaming-the-planet on flicker https://www.flickr.com/photos/roaming-the-planet/5648210923)*

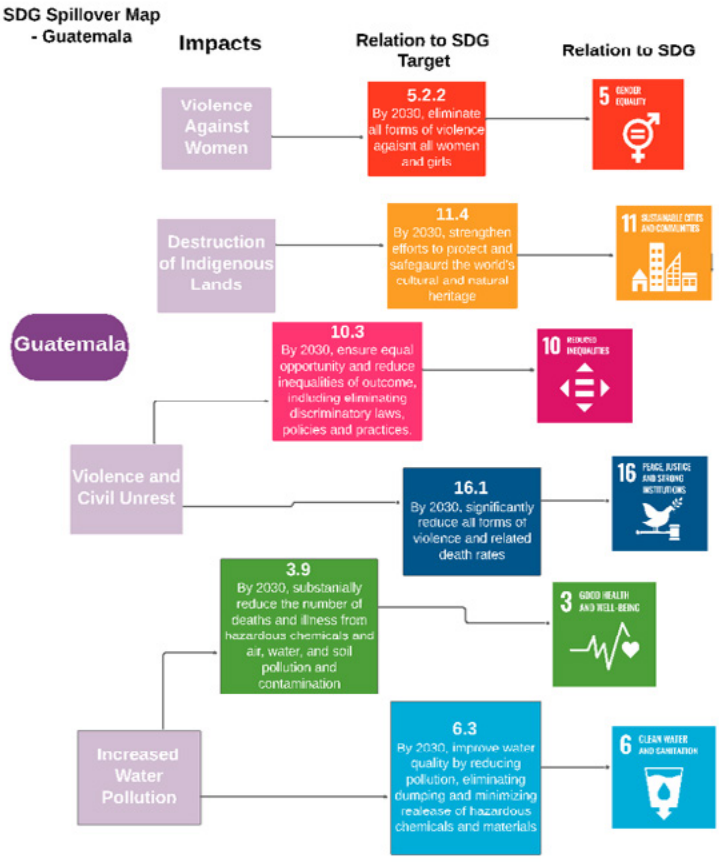
# CASE STUDY 2:
# TRANSBOUNDARY SPILLOVERS FROM THE CANADIAN MINING INDUSTRY

**Paraphrased from** Kyra Loat, BCCIC Intern

The Canadian Mining Industry has a large international presence with several mines operating around the world that extract a variety of resources. This section highlights spillovers within the industry, focusing on spillovers experienced in Guatemala and the Philippines; however, similar examples have been documented regarding Canadian-owned mines across the globe.[15]

## Guatemala

The Fenix Nickel Mine in El Estor, Guatemala was owned by Toronto-based company Hudbay Minerals. Currently, Hudbay is under investigation regarding a class action lawsuit filed by 11 Indigenous Q'eqchi women of El Estor. These cases against the company refer to ongoing activities that started in 2011. However, the Fenix mine has since been sold to a Russian company.[16] Although the mine is no longer operated by Hudbay, the ongoing court case marks the first international case to be tried in Canada regarding accountability for a mine overseas. In this case, women claim that police and private security personnel employed by the company set houses on fire and violently gang-raped women in the community while men were away tending to the fields, in an attack to drive the people off their lands.[17] These allegations suggest that Hudbay's overseas activities detract from Guatemala's


SDG Spillover Map - Guatemala
Impacts
Relation to SDG Target
Relation to SDG
Violence Against Women
5.2.2
By 2030, eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls
Destruction of Indigenous Lands
11.4
By 2030, strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
Guatemala
10.3
By 2030, ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices.
Violence and Civil Unrest
16.1
By 2030, significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates
3.9
By 2030, substanially reduce the number of deaths and illness from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination
Increased Water Pollution
6.3
By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing realease of hazardous chemicals and materials

achievement of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions) by increasing gender-based violence, and from SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) as a result of the defamation of cultural and natural heritage. These acts of violence and destruction towards Indigenous lands sparked protests within the community against the use of Indigenous land for international mining, which gave rise to physical violence on both sides and the murder of a Q'eqchi community leader.[18]

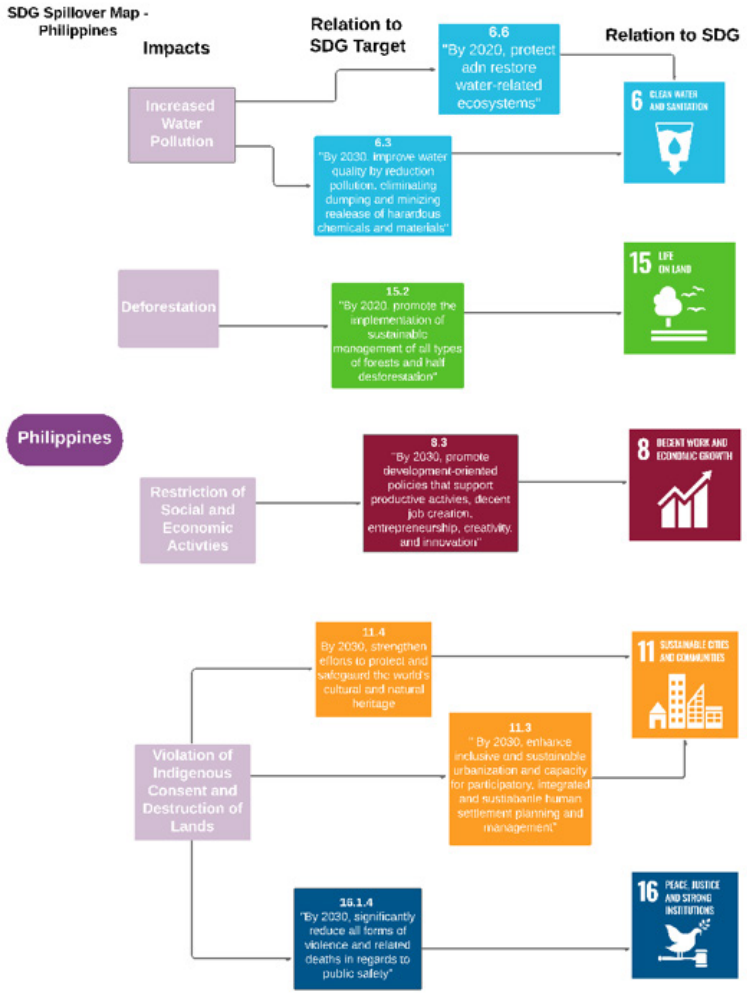
In addition to human safety and security, the Fenix mine also threatens environmental integrity in the area. It is located near Lake Izabal, which is Guatemala's largest source of freshwater and is an important breeding ground for fish and irrigation support for agriculture. The lake therefore serves as a source of food and income for the local people, as approximately 20 Mayan villages are in the immediate area. However, with the presence of the mine, there have been high levels of contamination of cadmium, aluminum, copper, and mercury in the water.[19] The contamination and pollution of water in Guatemala prevents them from achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). These pervasive and unintended spillover effects on the safety and health of local communities are not captured in the value of the minerals harvested from the Fenix mine, and certainly are not considered at the end of the supply chain when consumers use batteries, kitchenware, mobile phones, or other common products that are made with nickel.

## Philippines

The Didipio Gold and Copper Mine in Kasibu, Philippines is owned by OceanaGold, which is a mining company headquartered in Vancouver, British Columbia. Since the mine has been in the area, there have been elevated levels of copper, lead, manganese, sulphates, iron, arsenic, cadmium, and selenium found in the water, such as the Didipio River.[20] Tests have shown that the water contains twice the amount of copper permitted for irrigation uses, which is concerning for agriculturists in the area, as much of their crops depend on the streams and rivers due to lack of rainfall. As a result, there has been a reported 30% decrease in agricultural activity in the area, and local residents are having to pay for bottled water for safe drinking and cooking.[21] Negative impacts on water sources for the surrounding communities hinders the Philippines' ability to achieve SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). Along with contaminated water, there is also evidence of deforestation due to the death of native trees in the area, which also impacts the achievement of SDG 15 (Life on Land) with regards to sustainable forest management.[22]

There have also been allegations that the company failed to obtain "free, prior, and informed consent" from the Indigenous Ifugao peoples of Didipio and violently demolished approximately 185 houses without compensation or relocation plans.[23] Local residents report that those who resisted the evacuation were beaten, which affects the Philippines' achievement of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). The presence of the mine has also restricted the social and economic activities of the local people, as the company has fenced off large sections of roads, which has blocked local farmers from transporting their produce to markets.[24] The inability to access local markets has forced more local farmers to work in the mine. This has prevented the Philippines from achieving SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) in regard to promoting local development and entrepreneurship.

There are several commonalities in the types of spillovers proliferated by overseas resource extraction projects. The most obvious are the environmental spillovers that stem from resource


SDG Spillover Map - Philippines
Impacts
Relation to SDG Target
Relation to SDG
Increased Water Pollution
6.6 "By 2020, protect adn restore water-related ecosystems"
6.3 "By 2030, improve water quality by reduction pollution, eliminating dumping and minizing realease of harardous chemicals and materials"
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
Deforestation
15.2 "By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests and half desforestation"
15 LIFE ON LAND
Philippines
Restriction of Social and Economic Activities
8.3 "By 2030, promote development-oriented policies that support productive activies, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation"
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
11.4 By 2030, strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Violation of Indigenous Consent and Destruction of Lands
11.3 " By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management"
16.1.4 "By 2030, significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths in regards to public safety"
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

extraction activities, which have implications for human health, biodiversity, and agriculture (food security), and security spillovers that in this case study have had deleterious effects on the safety of local communities. There are also socioeconomic spillovers, which could go in a positive or negative direction. On the one hand, resource extraction activities could bolster efforts to eradicate extreme poverty (SDG 1). However, there is also the potential for these large projects to adversely impact local economic activities such as agriculture. Finally, tensions between local communities and outsider employees associated with these resource extraction projects could lead to various forms of violence. The 2030 Agenda should be brought into discussions surrounding corporate responsibility initiatives by large multinational corporations, and Canadian policymakers should aim to mitigate potential transnational spillover effects such as the ones outlined in these case studies.

*The Canadian mining industry can have pervasive and unintended consequences on the environment, livelihoods, and safety of communities in which mining projects abroad operate (Source: Dominik Vanyi on Unsplash https://unsplash.com/photos/Mk2Is9UBO2E).*

# CASE STUDY 3:
# TRANSNATIONAL SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF A CANADA-BASED CYBER SECURITY SOFTWARE COMPANY

**Paraphrased from** Kyu-San Shim, BCCIC Intern

Technology has played a central role in advancing globalization through the sharing of information within and across borders. For an example of this we need look no further than the Internet, wherein terabytes of information are stored and exchanged between individuals, research institutions, private corporations, and governments. The dissemination of information is directly linked to achieving the 2030 Agenda; we rely on technology to raise awareness of the SDGs, to store and share indicator data for measuring progress on the SDGs, and to mobilize networks of actors to achieve the SDGs.

Information exchanges are regulated to varying degrees by governments, often using complex web-filtering software. Although such software can be useful in some contexts, such as preventing the spread of misinformation and violent content, it can also have undesirable outcomes such as the perpetuation of human rights violations. This has been found in governments that use a specific web-filtering software developed by Netsweeper, a software company based in Waterloo, Ontario. Netsweeper's products can be used to create a cyber secure environment for the operations of schools, telecom companies, private corporations, and government. However, work from the Citizen Lab, an interdisciplinary lab based at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto,[25] indicates that foreign governments have also used the software to censor content in order to promote state-centric interests, sometimes at the expense of their citizens' rights to a free press and non-discriminatory society.

The Internet has been an important platform for disseminating factual information, ideas, and opinions. However, the application of Netsweeper for censorship introduces a form of religious discrimination by preventing the free exchange of information. According to Citizen Lab, the use of Netsweeper by the Pakistani government through PTCL (Pakistan Telecom Limited) constitutes both ethnic and religious discrimination. All "anti-Islamic content", along with "sites promoting Balochi, Sindhi and Pahstun human rights" are censored from web access.[26] In Bahrain, the primary telecom provider has used the Netsweeper software to block Christian-affiliated sites. The government is predominantly of the Sunni sect of Islam and also extends this type of discrimination to other sects of the island such as Shia, particularly where politics are concerned. The government has blocked the website of the Shia political party Al Wefaq (alwefaq.net), to ensure that the Shia Muslim population does not have representation in politics.[27] Without representation, these communities are not able to mobilize resources to resolve their concerns. This form of discrimination undermines the achievement of SDG targets 10.2 (promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of… religion) and 10.3 (… eliminating discriminatory policies).

In Yemen, Netsweeper has been used to censor content portraying how citizens are affected by the war, including human rights violations. The government was concerned that this information could negatively reflect on the Houthi government and cause social unrest. Human Rights Watch is concerned about the arbitrary detainment of journalists and activists who speak out against the conflict in the country, and that Internet censorship exacerbates the oppression of dissenting views.[28] The erosive effect of Netsweeper on institutional accountability and human rights hinders the achievement of nearly all the targets under SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by preventing citizens from speaking out against violence.

There is no straightforward solution to problems like this. How to balance the benefits of novel technologies with potentially negative, unintended consequences remains an open question. The awareness that technology developed in Canada can have negative spillovers elsewhere in the world is an important first step to plan appropriate safeguards against its misuse.

# SPILLOVER ANALYSIS METHODS APPLIED TO THE SDGS

These case studies illustrate a multitude of spillover effects experienced by individuals and groups across the globe resulting from a variety of Canadian industries. While identifying spillovers is a key first step, the quantification of these spillovers is a necessary next step for making well-informed policy decisions. As highlighted above, many tools for quantifying spillovers are openly available for use by individuals with relevant skills. However, there are also challenges associated with conducting spillover analyses for use in policymaking. Identifying spillover effects is not an easy task in highly complex systems that may involve the exploitation of natural resources, production of waste products that could harm the environment and human populations, workers, consumers, and “middle-men”. Further, there is a distinction between conceptually identifying the existence of spillover effects and quantifying these spillovers for comparison to guide policy decisions for an accelerated 2030 Agenda.

Three methods that were originally developed for supply chain analysis have been proposed for quantifying SDG spillovers.[29] Multi-Regional Input-Output (MRIO) models give a geographically broad picture of spillovers associated with trade. This type of model, which is characterized as a top-down approach to quantifying spillovers because it looks at the supply chain, allows for a reasonably good comparison of spillover effects across countries or sectors. There are multiple global MRIO supply chain databases that are freely accessible for analysis; however, the supply chain data they encompass is by no means exhaustive, and therefore researchers are constrained by data availability.[30]

A recent study showcased an example of MRIO analysis applied to the SDGs for three indicators under SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 15 (Life on Land), and 17 (Partnerships to achieve the Goal) in the USA and Argentina.[31] Their spillover indicator for Goal 1 was an index reflecting the number of workers earning less than the poverty line ($1.25/day), where a score of 1 meant no working poor, and a score of 0 meant 100% of the population was under the poverty line. The index for Goal 15 represented species at risk (in thousands), where a score of 0 meant 1000 threatened species, and a score of 1 meant no threatened species. The index for Goal 17 was government revenue generated from taxes on production, bearing in mind that government revenues are allocated towards services and programs that achieve the SDGs. This analysis was conducted based on available MRIO data and therefore only reflects spillovers pertaining to trade.

In both countries, poverty appears to be very low (score of 1), however, spillover effects from global supply chains result in a subtraction from these scores (white space in Fig. 5). This result was obtained by incorporating the wages of foreign workers who harvest or manufacture goods that enter the American or Argentinian supply chain (most often crops such as coffee or minerals for electronics). The most common countries of residence of these foreign workers are Nigeria in the case of Argentina, and Tanzania in the case of the USA.[32] The SDG 15 results suggest that all threatened species in the USA were a result of production or trade, as indicated by the perfect score of 1 when not accounting for spillovers but with a net score of less than 0.25 after accounting for spillovers (white space in Fig. 5). Argentina latently had species at risk that could not be directly attributed to supply chain data from the MRIO database—this was either due to an unmeasured supply chain or some other non-production-related cause; however, some supply chains were still shown to contribute to the threatened status of hundreds of species.

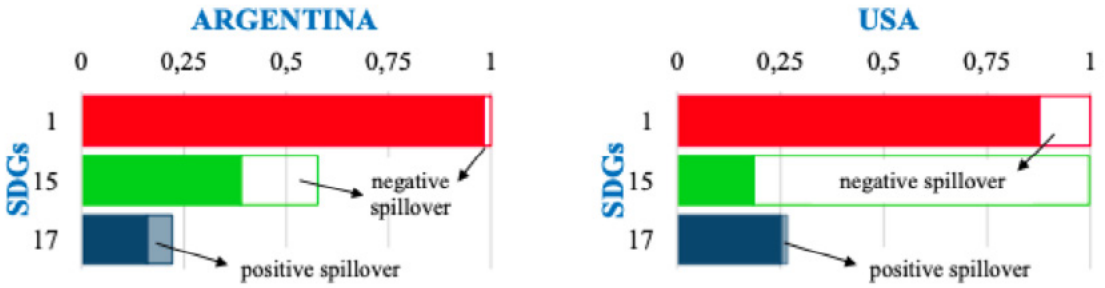



*Figure 4: Multi Regional Input-Output analysis of bidirectional spillover effects between Argentina and the USA pertaining to SDGs 1, 15, and 17. Image from Gomez-Paredes and Malik.[33]*

There are two disadvantages of MRIO. First, the data used have a coarse spatial resolution, which makes it impossible to quantify the impact of an individual company or product. Second, supply chain data within MRIO databases is by no means exhaustive. Therefore, researchers are constrained by data availability and often MRIO analyses will use estimated rather than measured data. Experts therefore recommend that regional or sub-national analyses use more detailed bottom-up approaches.[34] One such approach is Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), which is commonly used to assess the environmental footprint of individual products or companies. The environmental footprint consists of individual impacts such as emitting greenhouse gases and other airborne pollutants, the leaching of fertilizers (nitrates and phosphates) into waterways, or releasing heavy metals in waterways and drinking supplies. Material Flows Analysis (MFA) is a second type of bottom-up approach. MFA traces the physical flow of materials associated with commodities along national and international supply chains using industry data and international trade analyses. In principle, it can do so at any spatial resolution and for any type of material. MFA can also be applied to resources embedded in trade (such as virtual water or land use) which serve as inputs for the commodity but do not flow physically across international borders with the commodity.[35]

Analytical methods for identifying spillover effects need not be limited to supply chain evaluation methods, even though the spillover concept originally applied to supply chains. A population health study on data from Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania used structural equation modeling to assess the impacts of women's empowerment on child nutritional health.[36] The researchers quantified three dimensions of women's empowerment: socioeconomic assets, attitudes about intimate partner violence, and influence in household decision-making. Their sample size included 13,870 children across the three countries. The results showed that, controlling for other factors like wealth and maternal body mass index, all three of these women's empowerment domains directly influenced child nutritional status, suggesting that meeting targets under SDG 5 (Gender Equality) has spillover effects on the achievement of targets under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Although the researchers' methodology did not explicitly calculate a spillover index that can be

compared across countries, there is still great value in this type of research for identifying spillovers, and the findings can be incorporated into policy decisions and resource allocation towards various initiatives.

In principle, spillover effects can be quantified at any spatial scale. Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) introduced the SDG spillover index in the 2017 Sustainable Development report as a supplement to the SDG Index, which when paired with data tracking progress on the SDGs within state borders, can give a rough idea of countries' relative performance implementing the 2030 Agenda. They have calculated a spillover index for each country, which gives an idea of the far-reaching impacts of activities within their borders. In collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy, SDSN is also developing a global index that captures environmental spillovers and that can be directly used to inform domestic and international policy involving the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.[37] It is currently under development, but it will serve as a practical tool for making decisions pertaining to environmental spillovers.

It is possible to translate SDSN's spillover index to smaller spatial scales. In the Canadian context this could help determine which province's activities have the greatest spillovers on other provinces. It is reasonable to predict that the more populous provinces with high levels of industrial activity related to oil sands, manufacturing, and forestry would have higher spillover indices based on the environmental spillover effects of these activities (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and deforestation) reaching across the country and beyond.

# FROM SPILLOVER ANALYSIS TO POLICY

As highlighted above, spillover effects can be readily quantified such that the spillovers from a particular entity (a community, country, product, company, or industry) may be compared with spillovers from another. Thinkers from SDSN, OECD, UN agencies, and academia have applied spillover analysis to the SDGs, and advocate its use in policy making in the SDG realm, but there are only a few practical examples of what the decision-making process actually looks like after the analysis has been done. The challenge is to design policy that appropriately responds to the findings of spillover analysis.

A natural question from policymakers might be: When evidence suggests that negative spillover effects may occur as a result of SDG policies or programs in one area, what options do policymakers have to prevent this from happening? We outline a generalized decision tree approach to policy options when evidence suggests that negative spillovers might occur:

1. **Set a threshold "acceptable" spillover index for a particular product, company, or industry.** This would require some preliminary research to identify what degree of negative spillover effects is acceptable and what is not, which will be context dependent. If a proposed policy action exceeds this acceptable spillover effect threshold, there are two options:
    a. *Do not take the policy action.* Spillover analysis can be useful for quantifying the magnitude of spillover impacts, so that decision-makers have enough evidence to decide not to proceed with a course of action that may have negative spillover effects. However, while appropriate in some contexts, deciding not to proceed with a policy action (a development project, a social assistance program, setting aside land for a nature reserve) can be unrealistic if there is already political will for the intervention to proceed. An all or nothing approach could also be problematic if the proposed policy could produce significant benefits for a particular domain or group. Trade-offs like these often arise between socioeconomic goals and environmental goals—economic opportunities associated with infrastructure construction or resource extraction may bring economic prosperity to a community but may have negative environmental impacts. It can be impractical to choose one or the other.
    b. *Conduct an offset action.* This principle already exists in environmental impact assessment in Canada. For example, if a construction project is demonstrated to have a negative environmental impact, the

company is required to offset this impact in the form of ecosystem restoration. This is the most practical approach and easiest to adopt because the groundwork is already in place; however, there are philosophical/moral issues with the attitude that it is acceptable for an action to have negative impacts as long as you compensate for it somewhere else.

2. **Take a minimization approach** in which you consider several policy options and then select the one with the lowest spillover index. In some situations, other factors, such as the financial cost of the various options, could complicate the decision. In such a situation, an optimization approach between spillover effect and cost could be used. This approach is taken in conservation planning, where spatial prioritization software uses algorithms to find a spatial configuration of a marine protected area to optimize fish stocks conservation using economic outcomes from the fisheries.[38]

One practical challenge associated with spillover analysis is the issue of missing or inconsistent data across countries.[39] To date this has largely occurred because statistical offices across countries collect data at different spatial and temporal scales. National data are not always openly shared with the public and there are no international guidelines or mandates on data collection, validation, analysis, and use related to spillover effects. More open-data protocols should be developed such that the private sector can share information that is necessary for the quantification of spillovers. These can be addressed through: data transparency laws that obligate companies to report spillovers associated with the trade of goods and services and the allocation of resources (i.e., research grants) for organizations or contractors that have the expertise to do detailed spillover analyses on the trade of specific goods or services. An ecosystem mapping approach (outlined in Chapter 1 of this report) can be used to systematically map the spillover data ecosystem by identifying **data demands** for quantifying the spillovers associated with meeting all the SDG targets, **data supply** (who can provide the required data), the **data infrastructure** (how the data are stored, managed, and shared), and all the **actors** involved (data producers, consumers, and intermediaries).

One of the greatest challenges associated with quantifying spillovers is that they often tend to be unanticipated and unintended consequences of certain actions. They are therefore only identified *post hoc* when negative outcomes have already been experienced. Given this, it is imperative that decision-makers adopt a proactive approach by anticipating possible spillovers from their policies, raising awareness of the existence of spillover effects, and showcasing past examples of how these unintended impacts have arisen. Although it is impossible to anticipate all the unintended outcomes of every single project or policy, past examples provide evidence of general patterns that can inform predictions. For example, remote worker camps tend to result in increased crime rates, sex work, and gender-based violence, particularly against Indigenous women, all of which are serious consequences of oil, gas, and forestry camps.[40]

The last challenge associated with incorporating spillover analyses into SDG policy is the user-friendliness of the methods summarized above. For spillovers that are similar to supply chain analyses, multi-regional input-output, life cycle assessment, and material flows analysis all require some training on the available tools. For this reason, governments incorporating spillover analysis into their 2030 Agenda strategies may need to hire consultants or permanent employees with a background in statistics and mathematical modeling in economics or the natural sciences.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Researchers should work towards developing a tailored methodology for analyzing and quantifying SDG spillovers from Canada. This could entail exploration of bottom-up approaches (e.g., the study that reviewed women's empowerment on child nutritional health in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania) in tandem with the more established top-down approaches (e.g., Multi-Regional Input-Output and LCA, as well as hybrid supply-chain approaches recommended in Schmidt-Traub et al).[41]
- The global community should develop a mandate and guidance surrounding the consistent and open reporting of data for spillover analysis of the SDGs. Similarly, the Canadian government (potentially in partnership with CSOs and academia) should develop a central database for Canadian spillover data that contains data types most appropriate for the methodologies.
- In their Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, countries should include spillover analysis in their performance reviews of SDG targets. Positive spillovers can be promoted and negative spillovers can be minimized using performance indices that accurately portray the net achievement of the SDGs at home and abroad.
- The Canadian federal SDG unit should work with provinces and ministries to conduct spillover analyses of Canada's largest resource industries (oil and gas, forestry, mining, and fisheries), as these industries have the most pervasive transboundary impacts on other countries' abilities to implement the SDGs within their borders.

# ENDNOTES

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# CHAPTER 5: ACCELERATING THE SDGS FROM A GENDER LENS

*Written by Tanya Wragg-Morris[1]*

# ABSTRACT

This chapter looks at the concept of applying a gender lens to policies, programs, and initiatives towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It explores why a gender perspective is important and how Canada has prioritized this type of lens in its international policy. The chapter identifies gender equality as a specific lens, as a singular goal (SDG 5), and as a cross-cutting measure for the 2030 Agenda, which when applied as a framework incorporating multiple viewpoints, more closely reflects the integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs. Comparison is drawn between singular and multiple lens approaches and the strengths and weaknesses of each. Finally, this chapter provides recommendations with regards to a gender-centric multiple lens approach for the 2030 Agenda that places effort and action across multiple sectors, partnerships, and intersecting inequalities to create a holistic and synergistic approach that leaves no one behind.


# INTRODUCTION

SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) is essential to meet a key priority of the 2030 Agenda, 'leaving no one behind' (LNOB). Gender equality is both a goal in and of itself and a cross-cutting theme of the 2030 Agenda as it is believed that progress on Goal 5 will positively impact all of the other SDGs. For this reason, the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) has chosen to investigate Canada's decision to promote gender-responsive policies and programs and to examine whether a gender-focused framework is the best approach. Focusing on women is important, as they are known to bear disproportionate burdens from shocks to the economy and the environment.[2] The current COVID-19 epidemic is no exception. Women around the world face increased threats from domestic violence, exposure to the disease, greater burdens of household care, and economic instability.[3]

*Cover of the BCCIC (2020) report entitled, 'Leveraging the Interlinkages: Gender equality, women's empowerment and the SDGs'.*

This chapter will consider whether applying a gender lens to policies and programs is the best response to these and other challenges as identified in the 2030 Agenda. It will discuss why a focus on women is important, ways to integrate and conceptualize a gender framework for the 2030 Agenda (as a goal, a lens, and a cross-cutting theme), and whether a single or multiple lens approach provides a more suitable framework for the 2030 Agenda. The integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs suggests that a multiple lens framework, promoting improvement across all areas, can best improve the situation for women and girls and is most effectively applied when government at all levels, the private sector, and civil society (including the most marginalized) work together as a system to create positive change.[4]

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS

This chapter looks at a framework for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a gender lens. The chapter addresses two key themes: the pledge to leave no one behind and gender as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda. Three terms are important to define: gender equality, gender equity, and women's empowerment.

**Gender equality** is a state in which women enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and entitlements. The treatment of women and men is then impartial, neutral, and relevant to their respective needs. **Gender equity** is the process of allocating resources, programs, and decision-making fairly across all genders according to their respective needs. **Women's empowerment** is a process through which women achieve choice, power, and agency in their lives. To be empowered, women must have equal capabilities (skills, tools etc.) and access to resources and opportunities, and an ability to use these rights and opportunities to make decisions as full and equal members of society.

When applying a gender framework, an initiative may be **gender responsive**[5] meaning efforts are made to identify and acknowledge the existing differences and inequalities between women and men and articulate actions, steps, policies, and initiatives to address the different needs, aspirations, capacities, and contributions of women and men. Interventions that are **gender transformative** go beyond acknowledging differences and responding to them, and seek to reverse fundamental inequalities and imbalances.

It is also important to identify the subtle nuances between a gender lens, intersectional lens, and a 'leave no one behind' lens. A **gender lens** serves to identify the different issues arising out of the experience of being a woman, a man, or those identifying differently. Gender lenses typically place women at the forefront of development programs, recognizing that women are disproportionately affected by hardships in multiple ways.[6] While sometimes considered in policies and programs, a gender lens does not always account for multiple intersecting inequalities. For this reason, an **intersectional lens** can be differentiated from a gender lens. An intersectional lens recognizes layered and multiple forms of inequality that can arise from factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, disabilities, or geographic location.[7] It recognizes that some women may be further behind than others depending on their particular circumstances. Finally, a **leave no one behind lens** places a focus on "reaching the furthest behind first."[8] It acknowledges the fact that "women and girls who experience multiple forms of discrimination, including those based on age, class, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity or migration status have made the least progress."[9]

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

One of the pillars of the 2030 Agenda is the pledge to leave no one behind (LNOB). Achieving this objective requires a focus on equity, empowerment, and giving a voice to the world's most vulnerable and marginalized populations. An analysis across countries of who is being left behind demonstrates that among the most disadvantaged are women and girls who face the compounded effects of gender-based and other forms of discrimination.[10] 'Leaving no one behind' requires paying close attention to the unintended outcomes of development interventions, which often result in women and other vulnerable people being excluded from full access to their benefits or not being given due consideration in public policies and national processes.[11]

*Source: LNOB logo, CONCORD Sweden*

Ongoing inequalities often stem from unjust political and social systems, while addressing these barriers and attempting to reshape them often requires dramatic and difficult transformations. Examples of the root causes of inequalities include legal discrimination, discriminatory social norms and attitudes, low levels of decision-making by women and girls in sexual and reproductive health issues, and less than full political participation at all levels of government.[12] Giving a voice to groups that have been underrepresented or excluded altogether requires fundamental social and economic rethinking and reorganization. This transformation requires support at all levels from government to local grassroots organizations.[13] Without addressing the structural issues at the root of gender inequality, the ability to achieve SDG 5 will remain significantly hindered.

Examining areas where discrimination can occur is the first step toward establishing a baseline measure from which countries can make improvements to help their most vulnerable groups. However, obtaining rigorous data on gender and discrimination poses significant challenges for many countries. Countries may have weak evaluation structures or may be unable to support the additional burden or costs of collecting gender-related data.[14] Women and girls experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that is not captured through simple data analysis.[15] This concept of intersectionality[16] deepens our understanding of the burden placed on women and already marginalized or vulnerable populations, leaving them furthest behind. Identifying those furthest behind requires a simultaneous disaggregation of data by multiple dimensions, including income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant to national contexts.[17] The Canadian Government has made available online tools to help departments apply intersectionality to their work using the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) framework. The resources provide an analytical process to examine how intersecting identity factors impact the effectiveness of government initiatives.[18]

When gathering baseline data it is also important to incorporate a qualitative dimension in order to better understand and address the root causes, or the 'why', of observed inequalities.[19] While quantitative data answers the 'what' in terms of observed inequalities, qualitative data, gathered by speaking with women and hearing their stories, can help bridge gaps that quantitative methods leave unaddressed. Ladysmith, a feminist research consultancy based in Los Angeles, California, has created an open-source Gender Data Kit[20] that provides gender-responsive technologies, methods, and resources for gender data projects. Their data collection methods include speaking directly with women by going to where they live and hearing their stories, to integrate a qualitative viewpoint into the data. The kit's first use has been with a mobile app to assist women experiencing extraordinary levels of gender-based violence (GBV) migrating along the Colombia-Venezuela border. 'Cosas de Mujeres,' is a WhatsApp-supported platform used to connect women with services and to generate action-oriented data.[21] By better understanding the 'why' behind challenges facing women – from their perspective – solutions can be created that more effectively respond to the needs of those facing hardship.

Built-in biases in certain sectors can also perpetuate exclusion and inequality. For example, programs and services related to transportation, energy, water, banking, finance, and trade are often considered gender neutral and it is assumed that men and women benefit equally from access or improvements to them. In these cases, it is believed that such projects do not require a gender lens or disaggregated data when looking at progress and results.[22] The Canadian International Resource and Development Institute (CIRDI) is looking at ways to address this gap in sectors that are either seen as gender neutral or that rarely experience the application of a gender lens.

## Innovative and promising practices

The Canadian International Resources and Development Institute (CIRDI) has introduced its first institutional gender strategy.[23] Applying a gender lens to policies and programs is important when there is a cluster of work that tends to be easy to gender and a cluster of work that is harder to gender. Gender lens applications too often focus on traditional areas for women and girls such as health, food security, and gender-based violence (GBV) while other sectors, such as natural resources, are commonly left out.[24] "In resource-dependent communities, women are more likely to face risks associated with resource extraction and development, and are much less likely to access related benefits and remedial measures. At the same time, women hold unique knowledge, skills and experience that, if viewed as an asset and deployed effectively, can contribute to improved outcomes in this area."[25]

CIRDI's institutional gender strategy takes an intersectional approach that includes a focus on disaggregated factors affecting women. The strategy applies an integrated approach to apply gender to the institution's three priority areas: public sector capacity and governance, the environment and climate change, and inclusive growth and community engagement.[26] The strategy offers tools to apply a deeper level of gender analysis to the natural resources sector in each of these areas. It also addresses the specific gender needs faced by people working in this sector. Specific action is required to address the gendered nature of inequalities that impede this and other sectors from acting "as catalysts for poverty alleviation and sustainable development."[27] The strategy aims to support sustainable and inclusive benefits for women, men, and children with gender equality being fully integrated within the natural resources sector.

CIRDI Canadian International Resources and Development Institute

Addressing nontraditional areas with a gender lens requires open-mindedness and the participation of men and women working together. Shifting preconceived notions of gender norms and roles is difficult and time-consuming work. It is work that requires a basic understanding of gender as a social construct and a recognition that members of different sexes will have differing needs in various settings to enable them to reach full equality. Gender mainstreaming across the natural resource sector is significant as women hold substantial influence on the quantity and quality of resources that are available and the social and reproductive uses of these resources.[28]

Gender mainstreaming training in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) region is another example of the way that gender analysis has been used in less traditional sectors, such as energy, climate change, and fisheries. Examples of where this work has taken place include recent training (April 2020) with the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) organized by their Project Development and Gender Unit.[29] Two half-day training sessions focused on understanding how gender impacts the energy sector and how gender mainstreaming can be implemented in policies and practices. The training addressed the unique requirements of women and men in the energy sector, both from the standpoint of energy usage needs and of people working in the sector.

A three day training session has also been conducted in another nontraditional sector in the region with gender mainstreaming for actors in the Caribbean fisheries sector, including members of the Gender in Fisheries Team, Barbadian women fisherfolk, and technical staff from government agencies, UN agencies, and NGOs.[30] Having women and men equally at the table and equally considered significantly improves resource-sharing arrangements as well as benefit sharing. Moreover, it allows for coordinated and collective engagement on sustainability. Too often women are overlooked as being equal players in these nontraditional sectors, thus ignoring their power as consumers to drive a focus on sustainable supply and value chains.[31]

The compounded hardships on women and girls from intersecting inequalities are not limited to developing nations. The Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, has noted that "distinct gaps exist between women and girls who, within the same country, are living worlds apart."[32] In the United States of America, the percentage of African American and Native American women living in poverty is twice as high as that of Caucasian women.[33] In Canada, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis women are three times more likely to experience violence than non-indigenous women.[34] In Canada, over half of single women with young children live in poverty. This same figure for single men is less than a quarter.[35] These alarming statistics demonstrate that it is especially important that efforts be made to help women and to ensure that no one is left behind.

*Source: CoWomen on Unsplash https://unsplash.com/@cowomen*

# A GENDER LENS FOR THE SDGS

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is both a stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting theme of the SDGs. It is a cross-cutting theme for the 2030 Agenda because creating a focus on SDG 5 will have far-reaching benefits that go beyond those accruing to women and girls. Due to the interlinked nature of the goals, and evidence that gender equality can have a positive impact on reaching the other 16 SDGs, we can consider the application of a gender lens as a vital input toward the accelerated achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda is characterized by complex interdependencies among the goals. When looking at the 2030 Agenda from a gender lens or by applying gender as a cross-cutting theme, gender appears frequently within the extensive list of 17 goals that contain 169 targets and 231 unique indicators.[36] Among the 231 indicators, 53 specifically reference gender. These indicators reference gender either by specifically targeting women and girls under SDG 5, calling for disaggregation by sex, or by referring to gender equality as an underlying objective.[37] The UN Secretary-General has called for accelerated progress in relation to the 2030 Agenda by "breaking silos and building integrated approaches to implementation", "harnessing synergies between different policy interventions", "moving beyond sectoral and towards systematic approaches", and addressing women's rights and needs "in an integrated and coordinated manner."[38]

It is estimated that achieving gender equality around the world could increase the global gross domestic product (GDP) by $12-28 trillion in a single decade. The Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF) notes that "numerous studies during the last decade have confirmed that reducing gender inequality enhances productivity and economic growth and when countries achieve gender equality they maximize their competitiveness and economic potential."[39] The evaluations CWF has completed show that "when you help women, they go on to help their children, families and communities, producing a powerful ripple effect".[40] Similar effects have been noted by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), whose women's cooperative project in Madagascar raises women's economic potential and has positive trickle-down effects on their families and communities.[41]

## GENDER-SPECIFIC INDICATORS ACROSS THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### 5. GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1.1 Legal frameworks to promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination based on sex
- 5.2.1 Women and girls subjected to intimate partner violence
- 5.2.2 Sexual violence against women and girls
- 5.3.1 Child marriage among women and girls
- 5.3.2 Female genital mutilation/cutting
- 5.4.1 Unpaid domestic and care work, by sex
- 5.5.1 Women in parliaments and local governments
- 5.5.2 Women in managerial positions
- 5.6.1 Proportion of women and girls who make informed decisions on reproductive health
- 5.6.2 Laws on equal access to reproductive health, information and education
- 5.a.1 Ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex
- 5.a.2 Laws that guarantee equal land rights
- 5.b.1 Women who own a mobile phone
- 5.c.1 Countries with system to track gender equality

### 4. QUALITY EDUCATION

- 4.1.1 Minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics at the end of primary and lower secondary, by sex
- 4.2.1 Early childhood development, by sex
- 4.2.2 Pre-primary participation, by sex
- 4.3.1 Participation of youth and adults in education, by sex
- 4.5.1 Parity indices for all education indicators
- 4.6.1 Proficiency (at a given age group) in functional literacy and numeracy skills, by sex
- 4.7.1 Mainstreaming of global citizenship education, gender equality and human rights
- 4.a.1 Upgrade education facilities with handwashing and single sex sanitation facilities

### 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment, by sex
- 8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female employees
- 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex
- 8.7.1 Proportion and number of children engaged in child labour, by sex
- 8.8.1 Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex
- 8.8.2 National compliance of labour rights, by sex
- 8.9.2 Jobs in tourism industries out of total tourism jobs, by sex

### 1. NO POVERTY

- 1.1.1 Population living below US$1.90 per day, by sex
- 1.2.1 Population living below the national poverty line, by sex
- 1.2.2 Multidimensional poverty among women
- 1.3.1 Population covered by social protection, by sex
- 1.4.2 Secure tenure rights to land, by sex
- 1.b.1 Proportion of government spending to sectors benefiting women, poor and vulnerable groups

### 3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio
- 3.1.2 Births attended by skilled health personnel
- 3.3.1 New HIV infections, by sex
- 3.7.1 Satisfactory family planning with modern methods
- 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate
- 3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services, including reproductive and maternal health

### 16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

- 16.1.1 Intentional homicide, by sex
- 16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths, by sex
- 16.2.2 Victims of human trafficking, by sex
- 16.2.3 Sexual violence against girls
- 16.7.1 Women in public institutions
- 16.7.2 Perceptions of inclusion in decision-making, by sex

### 2. NO HUNGER

- 2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex

### 10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- 10.2.1 People living below 50% of median income, by sex

### 11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- 11.2.1 Access to public transport, by sex
- 11.7.1 Share of open public space in built-up urban areas, by sex
- 11.7.2 Victims of physical or sexual harassment, by sex

### 13. CLIMATE ACTION

- 13.b.1 LDCs and SIDS receiving support for climate change-related planning and management

### 17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

- 17.18.1 Full disaggregation of SDG indicators

### 6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

No gender-specific indicators

### 7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

No gender-specific indicators

### 9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

No gender-specific indicators

### 12. RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

No gender-specific indicators

### 14. LIFE BELOW WATER

No gender-specific indicators

### 15. LIFE ON LAND

No gender-specific indicators

*Source: UN Women (2018)*

## Innovative and promising practices

The World Food Programme's Women's Cooperative project in Madagascar helps empower women by giving them the tools and skills required to contribute to their society, drive economic and social progress, and unleash their personal potential. By gaining technical skills and working together in agriculture and in local markets, the women participating in the project gain purchasing power that directly translates into increased nutrition for themselves and their families. As active economic actors in society, they are able to spend money buying food, health supplies, and paying school fees for their children. Their increased empowerment gives them agency over their lives and allows them to make decisions they need to thrive.[42]

*The World Food Programme's Women's Cooperative selling products at a local market in Madagascar*

As these examples demonstrate, a gender lens is an integral component of policies and programs that seek to leave no one behind when promoting the 2030 Agenda. Across all levels of government and foreign policy, Canada has placed a gender lens at the forefront, experiencing successes as well as facing persistent challenges in its efforts in this sector.

# A GENDER LENS IN CANADA

The Government of Canada has favoured a feminist approach, as is evident in its feminist policy. Canada's feminist approach prioritizes "the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as central to all international assistance efforts",[43] as demonstrated with the 2017 launch of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).[44] FIAP supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by working across six action areas that reflect the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is seen as a guiding lens for FIAP and is the core action area in its six-part framework.

Another initiative launched in 2017 is Canada's second *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (WPS) for the period 2017-2022. The action plan seeks to integrate the WPS agenda through federal government diplomacy, international assistance, and peace and security interventions.[45] Internationally, Canada has created the Women's Voice and Leadership Program,

HUMAN DIGNITY
PEACE AND SECURITY
GROWTH THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE
Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

*Source: Global Affairs Canada, 2017*

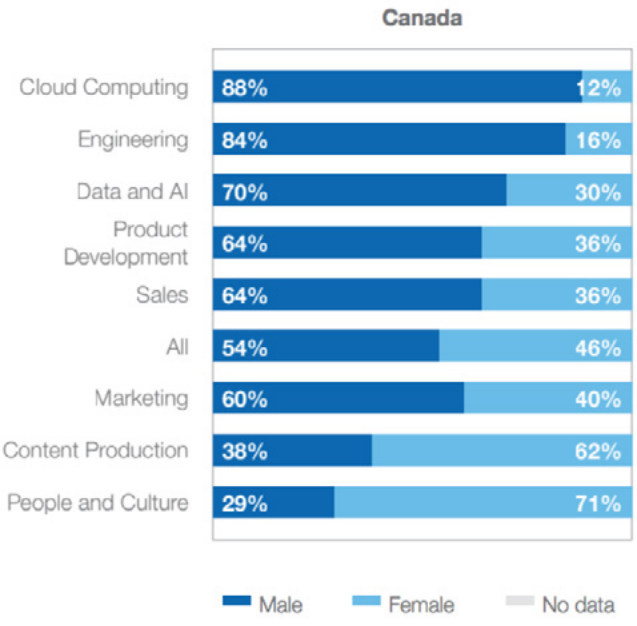
designed to support local women's organizations in developing countries that promote gender equality and advance the rights of women and girls.[46] Engaging citizens at the local level, Canada also launched its policy on *Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance - A Feminist Approach*. This policy aims to champion new and innovative ways to advance gender equality, women's empowerment, and women's rights by partnering with experts from civil society. The government has clearly noted that "Canada benefits from its engagement with members of civil society, who possess valuable expertise and understanding of the local context in which they operate."[47]

While its approach is distinctly gender-led, there is a clear effort to integrate gender as a cross-cutting measure, highlighting the interlinked and indivisible nature of the SDGs. In 2018, Canada introduced the Gender Results Framework (GRF), which outlines six areas where change is needed to reach gender equality: education and skills development; economic participation and prosperity; leadership and democratic participation; gender-based violence and access to justice; poverty reduction; and health and well-being.[48] This framework highlights an approach to integrating gender across a multitude of sectors.

Tangible achievements have also been made in Canada toward women's empowerment and gender equality. These include the appointment of the first gender-balanced federal Cabinet and the creation of the first department dedicated specifically to the advancement of women and gender equality. Canada released its first federal gender budget statement that examined the gender effects of all budget measures and launched the first federal strategy to address and prevent GBV.[49]

Despite significant gains in advancing the situation for women and girls, challenges persist in achieving full equality. A 2016 report by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada showed that gender-based analysis has not been implemented in nearly a quarter of departments and that when GBA+ was used, it was often inconsistent or incomplete.[50] It also noted the high rates of GBV that have persisted despite money directed to support sufferers.[51] Due to intersecting inequalities, some women in Canada suffer more than others as a result of multiple barriers: "Certain groups of women and girls face multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination that create disproportionate obstacles to their equality. These

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://unsplash.com/photos/_N7I1JyPYJw*




*Source: World Economic Forum, 2019*

groups include Indigenous women and girls, migrant and refugee women and girls, older women, women and girls who live in rural and remote areas, and women and girls living with a disability in Canada."[52]

Statistically, Canada sits at 19 out of 153 countries in the global gender gap rankings compiled by the World Economic Forum.[53] Canadian women are not yet equal participants in the Canadian economy,[54] are severely underrepresented in leadership roles, earn less on average than men, and are gravely outnumbered in certain rapidly growing and high-paying fields such as engineering, technology, data, and AI.[55] In 2018, women accounted for only 24 percent of workers in the natural and applied sciences.[56] The underrepresentation of women in specific sectors is due to multiple factors including social norms about gender roles, discrimination, harassment, and workplaces that do not offer flexibility for caregiving, commonly provided by women.[57]

In its review of gender equality in Canada, the OECD has recommended that the Canadian government engage more systematically with civil society organizations, including gender equality advocacy groups, eliciting their views on gender policy and governance.[58] To promote support for civil society and grassroots initiatives, the government announced a $100M investment over five years, starting in 2018-19, to increase funding to support women's organizations working to develop a strong, sustainable women's movement.[59]

An example of a civil society organization supporting grassroots efforts to increase women's empowerment is the Women's Economic Council (WEC). The WEC has created the 'Tools for Sustainability for Community Economic Development' (CED),[60] a program providing local social enterprises[61] with training and business expertise. The program offers support to help businesses promoting women's economic empowerment achieve their goal of improving women's economic outlook and creating successful businesses over the long term. The program helps social enterprises survive past the statistic that "roughly half of small businesses in Canada will fail within their first six years".[62] This support improves the chances that women-led social enterprises will reach their goal to improve women's economic outlook. The program also helps ensure success for women by taking a distinctly gendered approach to CED that acknowledges women's traditional role as caregivers and their unique needs. The program has achieved success beyond initial expectations, creating new jobs, fully self-employed entrepreneurs, and greater participation among all members and users of each social enterprise.[63]

A vibrant national civil society with space to express itself is indispensable in the effort for gender equality and women's empowerment. As argued by UN Women, "Around the world, there are women's movements advocating for gender equality and women's rights, challenging broader structures from authoritarianism, militarism and violence, to economic policies that perpetuate systemic inequalities."[64] It is essential to give them space to raise their voices and come together to support them through multiple stakeholder engagement and the leveraging of expertise at all levels.

# ONE LENS OR MULTIPLE LENSES?

Although specific lenses, for example a gender lens with inputs geared toward a specific goal, can create simplification and focus, they can also create an incomplete picture of the complex problems facing women and inhibit solutions for the long term.[65] Just as a gender focus can help achieve all of the 17 SDGs, so can focusing on each SDG outside of SDG 5 help to achieve gender equality and female empowerment.[66] Progress in some areas may suffer regression or stagnation when a singular focus is taken. If siloed approaches to implementation take precedence over integrated, multisectoral strategies, there is a potential to lose out on possible synergies.[67] As argued at the HLPF:

> *"To accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, a comprehensive approach, leveraging the synergies between Goal 5 and all other SDGs, should be pursued. As stated in the 2030 Agenda, the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial and realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all goals and targets".*[68]

To ensure no one is left behind, leveraging the benefits of a gender lens for the SDGs is imperative. However, it may be better to look at all of the SDGs and add the gender lens as a cross-cutting measure. Doing so can ensure that gender mainstreaming and a gender-transformative approach are applied to all policies, programs, and activities.[69]

Using a cross-cutting, multiple lens approach allows various levels of government and relevant private sector and civil society organizations to focus on their strengths, while operating from a place of partnership and accountability. Deetken Impact, an investment firm in Vancouver, British Columbia, leverages the power of civil society and private sector partnerships through their Ilu Women's Empowerment Fund. Deetken Impact partners with NGOs (Espoir and Insotec in Ecuador, FINCA in Haiti, and Pro Mujer International) to deliver programs with a gender lens that work across five of the SDGs. The fund provides micro-loans, enhanced access to mobile phone digital wallets, and digital literacy training, leveraging Deetken's expertise in financial instruments. One of the tools they have supported with FINCA is a digital wallet system called MonCash. MonCash benefits women by eliminating the need for women to carry cash and therefore making them less susceptible to theft and violence. It also creates improved time-savings and provides women greater empowerment through financial inclusion and a means of economic participation. This gender-transformative approach is shifting the perspective of women in vulnerable climates from one of victimization and hand-outs from cash-transfer programs to one of systemic changes in power dynamics with women taking control of their financial futures through the use of gender-sensitive digital financial products.[70]

Another example of an organization applying a cross-cutting approach is the Kenoli Foundation. Based in Vancouver, British Columbia, the Kenoli Foundation works with 25 civil society organizations (CSOs) in Central America, using a multi-lens approach to women-centred development. The organization supports women living in rural or remote areas who have few other resources or support to empower them. One of their programs is working with Asociación de Mujeres Defensoras de La Vida (AMDV) to support rural women in Honduras. Here they are providing solar stoves, reducing the negative health impacts of smoke inhalation from cooking on traditional open fires. This initiative helps women and their children—who often stand near their mothers—to have health-safe equipment and low-cost energy sources, with added benefits for the environment.

The Kenoli Foundation also works with ADEMI, a Mayan CSO located in Guatemala, where chronic child malnutrition rates are some of the highest in Latin America. Malnutrition affects early childhood development which then affects how children will perform at school, and later impacts their job prospects and their ability to earn a living. The program works with local health promoters to train mothers in healthy eating, organic gardening, saving native seeds, various types of irrigation, and raising small livestock.[71] Both organizations work holistically providing training in a variety of areas from nutritional practices, child development, and ecological farming techniques, to leadership, entrepreneurship and business skills. Through their work, the Kenoli Foundation has found that "women's lives are holistic and thus holistic solutions are required that cross multiple SDGs, such as reducing poverty, improving health, and addressing climate change."[72]

*Source: Kenoli Foundation, families learn with ADEMI in Guatemala.*

Robust project design requires the utilization of different and complementary skills for the purposes of data collection, analysis, and intervention design. Those who are being helped should not only provide input, but a degree of ownership over the process.[73] While a gender lens may seem at first glance to embody a single lens, in reality it can be thought of as a multiple and intersectional lens that brings together an array of facets including gender, social and cultural norms, age, disability/ability, class, religion, geography and many other issues that drive the relationships between people and the economy, their communities/society, and the environment. A gender lens, combined with a view of gender as a cross-cutting measure, can effectively serve as a pillar for a multiple lens approach to sustainable development.[74]

# A GENDER RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Recent work by the UN has highlighted the disproportionate impacts the COVID-19 virus is having on women and girls. These impacts are present in three predominant areas: a high percentage of women working in the health and social sector, increased economic pressures on women, and exceptionally higher rates of GBV. Around the world, women make up 70% of workers in the health and social sector.[75] These high rates mean that they face significant levels of exposure to the disease. Additionally, women perform 76.2% of the total hours of unpaid care work, more than three times as much as men.[76] These two factors can create a "double health care burden" on the part of female healthcare workers who are over-extended both at work and at home.[77] As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, women, already more likely to be living in poverty, will be further burdened as jobs are made redundant. Across the globe, compounded economic impacts will be felt hardest by women who statistically earn less, save less, and hold less secure jobs.[78] Lastly, incidence of domestic violence has increased dramatically, exacerbated by lack of mobility and heightened economic pressures. Women are now isolated at home with their abusers while services supporting survivors have been disrupted or made inaccessible.[79] Increased financial and social pressures, affecting both men and women, can add stress to already hostile and abusive environments.

While the impact of COVID-19 will be felt hardest by already vulnerable populations, including women, there is a hidden opportunity to "turn the COVID-19 crisis into a transformative moment for reducing inequality"[80] if governments take appropriate steps to address these issues. Solutions include leveraging technology to support those in quarantine who need access to GBV services and building upon existing initiatives that provide online support for legal aid and psychosocial support.[81] We must also provide resources to organizations at the front lines and social assistance packages for women in situations of GBV. The Canadian government's COVID-19 response package has earmarked $50 million CAD in support of shelters for women experiencing GBV.[82]

To address the gender impacts of the pandemic, the UN has set out three recommendations for all COVID-19 response plans, recovery packages, and budgeting of resources: "(1) include women and women's organizations at the heart of the COVID-19 response; (2) transform the inequities of unpaid care work into a new, inclusive care economy that works for everyone; and (3) design socio-economic plans with an intentional focus on the lives and futures of women and girls."[83] Placing women and girls at the center of government and civil society response actions can "fundamentally drive better and more sustainable development outcomes for all" to support an inclusive recovery plan that places us well on the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.[84]

# CONCLUSION

Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential elements of the 2030 Agenda, both as a cross-cutting measure for the SDGs and as a singular goal. While singular approaches create simplification and focus, they may miss out on potential synergies and partnerships that could improve progress toward the goals. Applying gender as a cross-cutting measure and acknowledging the interlinked nature of the SDGs speaks to the possible synergies and partnerships available from working across multiple sectors, while noting that a failure to deliver on any of the other SDGs will also negatively impact women and girls. This should be combined with an awareness that gender is not the only form of inequality people may face, and that those with layered forms of inequality will need further support. Applying a gender framework as a multiple lens approach that coordinates different perspectives, promotes policy coherence between the goals, and recognizes varying levels of inequality should be supported to further women's equality and empowerment and improve the situation for women and girls in Canada and around the world.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognize that inequality is not straightforward. Intersecting inequalities place some women in more vulnerable situations than others depending on a series of factors, such as geography, age, disability/ability etc. Applying an intersectional lens is imperative to help identify the most marginalized and those members of the population who are subject to compounding and intersecting inequalities.
- Collect robust data at all stages of the process. At all stages of gender data-collection, from establishing baseline measures to tracking improvements, data needs to be disaggregated across multiple factors including income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant to national contexts. Not only should gender data be disaggregated, it should incorporate a qualitative dimension to help establish the 'why' behind root causes of layered and intersecting inequalities.
- Strengthen partnerships and input from all sectors and actors. When developing gender-responsive initiatives, efficiencies and synergies can be realized by bringing sector actors with unique skills and expertise together to solve common problems. It is also important to develop solutions in a bottom-up, participatory way where women's groups from civil society and the women being supported are placed at the center of the process.
- Understand the holistic nature of women's lives and livelihoods. Women's lives are holistic, and therefore holistic solutions are required that acknowledge the multi-faceted issues affecting women's daily lives. Creative solutions to women's empowerment should seek to link these issues and look beyond the direct implications of targeted actions, to further see how they trickle down to other areas, other people in their community, and across the 17 SDGs.
- Appreciate that a gender lens framework is not a singular viewpoint. While it exists as a singular goal (Goal 5) of the SDGs, gender equality and women's empowerment is a cross-cutting theme that involves both men and women, and an array of viewpoints and characteristics. When applying this framework, efforts should be made to not ignore different sectors where gender has traditionally been omitted from policies and programs. Essential in this work is the recognition of the integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs and how progress in one area can support progress across all others.

# ENDNOTES

1 Tanya Wragg-Morris is a Research Analyst at Capilano University and an independent development consultant, working at the nexus of social, environmental and economic policy, most recently on gender mainstreaming in energy, agriculture, and climate change initiatives.

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5 Initiatives may also fall lower on a gender marker/scorecard being **gender-blind** where projects/programs/activities do not identify or acknowledge the existing differences and inequalities between women and men, **gender-aware** where gender is part of the rationale but does not shape the design and approach of projects/programs/activities, or **gender-sensitive** where projects/programs/activities identify and acknowledge the existing differences and inequalities between women and men.

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# CHAPTER 6: ‘LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND’ AND THE 2030 AGENDA

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# ABSTRACT

This chapter reflects on the conceptualization and utilization of the 2030 Agenda's cross-cutting 'leave no one behind' (LNOB) principle in the Canadian context. It responds to the *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy's* request for a clearer understanding of "who is being left behind, the reasons they are being left behind and their specific needs". It critiques the classification of 'vulnerable', marginalized, and underrepresented groups by encouraging the adoption of a more holistic and nuanced, intersectional and intergenerational analysis of LNOB that considers the multiple and intersecting barriers that are preventing certain individuals and groups from accessing services, resources, and opportunities in Canada. It describes innovative and promising practices that are informed by evidence, consultation, and partnership with marginalized groups, and on this basis develops recommendations to strengthen the interim national strategy and the mainstreaming of LNOB across SDG-related policies and programs in Canada.


# INTRODUCTION

The 'leave no one behind' (LNOB) principle was adopted as a cross-cutting theme of the 2030 Agenda to account for the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the underlying belief in the inalienable human rights and human dignity of all people. Policy documents pertaining to LNOB refer to specific categories of individuals or groups who are 'left behind' because they are vulnerable, marginalized, and underrepresented. In order to ensure a more nuanced understanding of LNOB and the needs of those who have been left behind, more consideration should be given to the positioning of individuals in multiple relations of social differentiation, and how this positioning informs highly contextualized and situational power dynamics and complex identity configurations. This requires an analysis of the attitudinal, socio-cultural, institutional, political, economic, and legal barriers that certain individuals and groups face as a result of intersecting positionalities and identities, and how this affects the realization of their human rights, equal participation, and social justice. With this information, policy makers and practitioners are better positioned to address the root causes of inequality, while building positive opportunity structures that promote resiliency and agency among those who are at risk of being left behind.

This chapter will discuss the way in which the leave no one behind principle has been understood at a policy level. It will then analyse the situation of certain at-risk groups in Canada from an intersectional and intergenerational perspective. Innovative and promising practices will be described specifically in relation to holistic, evidence-based, and participatory programs that have been informed by an intersectional analysis. The chapter will conclude with a set of broad recommendations on the conceptualization of the LNOB principle, and specific recommendations related to Canada's SDG strategy.

*BCCIC Women Deliver Lighthouse Dialogues in July 2019 (Source: Michael Simpson)*

# POLICY CONTEXT

## International

In order to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States have committed to recognize the fundamental dignity of all individuals.[2] The goals and targets associated with the SDGs are intended for all nations and people, but Member States endeavoured to reach those who are furthest behind first. LNOB is, therefore, intended as a cross-cutting theme of the 2030 Agenda. It is integrated through all 17 SDGs, and as a result the measurement of progress against global targets requires disaggregated data based on income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, and geographic location.[3] Furthermore, a substantial number of goals specifically seek to address those who have been left behind such as Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).[4] Populations identified by the United Nations (UN) as at risk of being left behind include children and youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, Indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons. LNOB has been interpreted by the UN very broadly, but specific reference has been made to three key features namely, poverty, inclusiveness, and inequality. Those left behind are denied human rights, including a right to education, health, and a decent standard of living, among other basic needs that they are unable to access or have met.[5]

The LNOB pledge is central to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda as advocated for by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This approach argues that a "generalized shift" is needed to transform deeply rooted hierarchical systems of wealth, decision-making and governance to systems that promote human rights and the provision of fair opportunities for all.[6] Such a shift requires systemic and transformative changes in "global rules to promote a fair distribution of development opportunities" and changes in national tax systems, resource management, and public policies "in accordance with social preferences and the priorities of their citizens".[7] In addition to a series of macro-economic measures and inclusive development policies, the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) encourages UN System entities and Member States to promote the participation of those most left behind in policy making processes.[8]

As part of the follow-up and review mechanism, Member States are encouraged to engage in voluntary, "country-led", "country-driven", and "inclusive" reviews of progress at national and sub-national levels in relation to the 2030 Agenda, and submit their reviews to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which meets under the auspices of ECOSOC. The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) aim to promote the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda by sharing experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons learned, and by mobilizing multi-stakeholder collaboration for the purposes of policy strengthening.[9] The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) conducted a review of VNRs and reported that the most significant increase in reporting was with respect to the inclusion of more robust information on LNOB, an increase from 61% in 2018 to 81% in 2019.[10] The CCIC report described an increase from 73% in 2017 to 89% in 2019 in terms of the number of countries that provided information on at least one vulnerable group. It also noted an increase from 22% to 36% of countries that highlighted their efforts to embed the LNOB principle in their overarching development plans.

Despite this progress, the CCIC report identified LNOB as an overarching challenge in the 2030 Agenda as specifically mentioned by 21% of countries, partly due to the dearth of data disaggregated by gender, age, and disability, and a lack of understanding among policy makers on how to operationalize the concept: "The extent to which these approaches are new or have changed because of the promise to leave no one behind is generally not articulated in VNR reports".[11] Recommendations from the CCIC report included prioritizing those furthest behind in policy and program development and establishing appropriate institutions and mechanisms to support a human rights-based approach, including the principle of universality and responsibility to future generations.

Canada was described by CCIC as a 'best case study in VNR good practice' because it provided a clear definition of the LNOB principle and a detailed goal-by-goal analysis of who is being—or is at risk of being—left behind.[12] For Canada, leaving no one behind means that "everyone can participate in, contribute to

and benefit from the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals".[13] The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) provided an assessment of the VNR reports that were submitted in 2019. The assessment covers 159 countries that are assessed against three main thematic criteria: data to determine who is at risk of being left behind, policies to address those at risk of being left behind, and sufficient government investments in education, health, and social protection. Canada ranked as 'ready' in all three categories with an overall LNOB 'ready' score.[14] Canada was also described as 'on track' when considering an outcome score based on an under-five mortality rate, undernourishment, access to finance, and electricity for the entire population. Both readiness and outcome scores were found to be positively correlated with the country's income classification, leading the authors to argue that this "illustrates a key challenge in delivering on the leave no one behind commitment: countries with most people left behind are also those that tend to have fewer resources to redress this imbalance".[15] Despite this overall 'readiness' and 'on track score', research suggests that within Canada's overall population, certain marginalized groups "continue to suffer the most". As the UN SDG Progress Report (2019) notes, the "global response has not been ambitious enough".[16] One could make the same argument when considering LNOB progress in the Canadian context.

## Canada's SDG & LNOB Strategy

The interim document *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy* defines LNOB as meaning that "everyone—no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or abilities—should be included in the economy and in society".[17] It identifies categories of persons who are generally considered to be left behind, namely women, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, people with disabilities, seniors, members of the LGBTQ2[18] [hereafter LGBTQIA2S+] community, and youth. It includes Actions for supporting those furthest behind and ensuring adequate monitoring to track progress for all against the Canadian Indicator Framework (CIF).[19] The strategy notes that local governments, institutions, and communities are best situated to leverage existing connections to promote the LNOB principle, but that this should be done in partnership with Indigenous communities and other underrepresented groups.[20]

The SDG Funding program shares these goals in working towards the 2030 Agenda. Launched in November 2018, the funding program foregrounded the LNOB principle. Applicants were required to demonstrate how they are working towards meeting two of four objectives, which included "ensuring that Canada's progress on the 2030 Agenda leaves no one behind, including vulnerable or marginalized groups" (Objective 3) and "fostering and integrating Indigenous and local knowledge into approaches and efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda" (Objective 4).[21]

" By fostering partnerships through the SDG Funding Program, the Government of Canada is accelerating progress on the SDGs and delivering better outcomes for all Canadians, leaving no one behind."
- The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister Families, Children and Social Development
Canada

*Canada's SDG Funding Program (Source: https://www.facebook.com/Can2030Agenda/)*

| | Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy: 30 Actions to 2030[22] |
|---|---|
| **Action 9** | Work in partnership with organizations and communities to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups are aware of and engaged in the 2030 Agenda. |
| **Action 15** | Support research in areas that help identify gaps in Canada's efforts to meet the SDGs or improve the understanding of the social, economic, and environmental needs of under-represented populations who are at risk of being left behind. |
| **Action 5** | Develop long-term inclusive engagement plans with Indigenous partners and communities, National Indigenous Organizations, Modern Treaty organizations and Indigenous self-governments to further implement the 2030 Agenda. Identify opportunities for collaboration and for integrating Indigenous perspectives, priorities and ways of knowing into the SDGs, support capacity building and increase awareness about the 2030 Agenda. |
| **Action 13** | Support First Nations, Metis, and Inuit-led research initiatives, protocols, and governance structures and partner with schools, universities, academic institutions and research networks to support research, development, resource sharing and youth engagement in the SDGs. |
| **Action 22** | Implement the 2030 Agenda with full regard for the rights of Indigenous peoples by protecting and promoting these rights, as reflected in the 10 Principles of Reconciliation, the TRC's calls to action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' calls to justice and the UNDRIP. |
| **Action 23** | Consult with National Indigenous Organizations and Indigenous communities to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is implemented collaboratively and in ways that respect the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis to self-determination, and support participation in implementation, follow-up and review processes. |
| **Action 24** | Raise awareness about Indigenous ways of knowing among all Canadians. |
| **Action 25** | Support the development of resources that connect the past, present and future experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada to the 2030 Agenda. |

# WHERE DOES CANADA STAND ON LNOB?

Canada's Third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was submitted to the UN in March 2018. The UPR assesses strengths and challenges with respect to human rights progress within the country. There were 275 recommendations made to Canada related to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 4 (Quality Education), of which 208 were accepted.[23] In its response to the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, the Government of Canada committed to engaging with provincial and territorial partners to discuss ILO Convention 189,[24] the Convention on Enforced Disappearance[25] and accession on the Optional Protocol on the Convention against Torture[26] and the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[27] The federal government also highlighted a number of recommendations that are currently being addressed, including initiatives to improve access to services for Indigenous Peoples; consultation on a human rights-based approach to housing; the development of complementary strategies to address gender-based violence with federal, provincial, and territorial

governments; community engagement on a national anti-racism campaign; implementation of anti-discrimination legislation; and efforts to improve the safety and wellbeing of those in the justice system. Civil society organizations, such as Amnesty International, critiqued the Government of Canada's response because it "primarily confirms initiatives that are already underway and do not substantially advance the state of human rights in Canada. The lack of concrete plans and timelines to coordinate implementation of international human rights across federal, provincial and territorial governments is concerning".[28]

In a similar vein, the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner encouraged the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive national human rights action plan in order to implement the recommendations of the UPR.[29] These recommendations included addressing the root causes of the overrepresentation of African Canadian and Indigenous peoples in the justice system; addressing the root causes of trafficking and exploitation of Indigenous women and children; addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in foster care and in the child welfare system; increasing efforts to address unemployment by disadvantaged and marginalized groups including African Canadians, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA2S+ persons; and ensuring equitable social services for Indigenous Peoples and other minority groups, in particular "adequate needs-based funding" and the provision of social programs on reserves that are "on par" with provincial funding levels.[30]

The Canadian Human Rights Commission's (CHRC) 2018 Annual Report to Parliament (2019) noted that the Commission accepted their highest number of complaints within a decade at 1,129. Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, racialized individuals, religious groups, and individuals with diverse sexual orientations or gender identities continue to experience discrimination in Canada. Citing Statistics Canada, the CHRC (2019) noted that police reported hate crimes increased by 47% from 2016 to 2017.[31] The CHRC attributed this increase in reports to new initiatives, such as an accessible online complaint platform, that have made it easier for people to "speak out"[32] rather than to an increase in discrimination trends. As argued by the Chief Commissioner Marie-Claude Landry, "I am encouraged that more people than ever feel empowered to speak out about discrimination, but not everyone living with discrimination is able or willing to ask for help. Speaking out against intolerance and discrimination is a responsibility we all share."[33]

Despite Canada's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)[34] in 2010, concerns were also raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017). These concerns included the failure of government to "appropriately incorporate" the provisions of the Convention across sectors and levels of government; the uneven application of the Convention by judiciary and law enforcement officials; and the dearth of legislation and public policies to protect the rights of persons with disabilities who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex".[35] In December 2018, the Government of Canada acceded to the Optional Protocol of the UNCRPD, thereby giving persons with disabilities additional protection and recourse if they believe their rights have been violated. Subsequently, in July 2019 the Accessible Canada Act came into force to complement the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act to proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. At sub-national levels, this agenda has been reinforced by laws and policies such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act[36] and the 10 Year Action Plan for Disabilities in British Columbia.[37] The Government of Canada accepted eleven UPR recommendations related to persons with disabilities, and emphasized that "Canada is advancing the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities and will continue promoting the coherence and complementarity of its legislation and processes".[38] Nevertheless, challenges still remain in terms of meaningful inclusion and equity for persons living with disabilities as this chapter will demonstrate.

In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, also raised concerns about the rights violations experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. He argued, "It is difficult to reconcile Canada's well-developed legal framework and general prosperity with the human rights problems faced by indigenous peoples in Canada, which have reached crisis proportions in many respects".[39] In his report to the UN General Assembly, he described the significant well-being gap between Indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians in relation to health care, housing, education, welfare, and social services. Although not an exhaustive list, he referred to the violence experienced

*BCCIC Women Deliver Longhouse Dialogues in June 2019 (Source: Michael Simpson)*

by Indigenous women and girls, the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system, the lack of effective participation of Indigenous peoples, and general distrust among Indigenous peoples towards federal and provincial governments—all issues that have been brought to the fore by Indigenous leaders and advocates for some time. Subsequently, in May 2016, the Canadian government officially adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)[40] with the promise of implementing it within Canadian law. Unfortunately, this has not materialized at a federal level because Bill C-262, which sought to ensure the consistency of Canadian laws with UNDRIP, was not passed at the Senate. At a provincial level, the government of British Columbia passed legislation in November 2019 to implement UNDRIP in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, working closely with the First Nations Leadership Council (BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs).[41]

There are various other legal-policy initiatives underway, including the federal Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework[42] and a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action recommendations. The Calls to Action referred specifically to the federal, provincial, and territorial governments' responsibility to "work with Aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence, and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused"[43] and to appoint "a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls".[44] The Canadian government's commitment of $53.8 million to this Inquiry and the implementation of some of its initial recommendations,[45] reveals a recognition and acknowledgement of the persistent and deliberate rights violations and abuses experienced by Indigenous women and girls, which is rooted in historic, systemic, and institutionalized oppression of Indigenous communities. Despite these developments, considerable challenges must still be addressed as was observed in the UPR Review,[46] and provincial and federal governments must work collectively with Indigenous governments and communities to ensure that Indigenous peoples are not left behind in the 2030 Agenda, as will be discussed in forthcoming sections.

# MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS

The *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy* has identified a need for further information and research on the situation of who is being 'left behind': "For Canada, achieving this principle starts with supporting those furthest behind and putting in place adequate monitoring to ensure progress improves for all. This also requires a clear understanding of who is being left behind, the reasons they are being left behind and their specific needs".[47] As has been discussed, the strategy identified the following categories of persons who are being left behind: women, Indigenous people, newcomers, people with disabilities, seniors, members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, and youth. Instead of focusing on these broad categories, this section will consider the unique needs of certain individuals and groups who were identified as particularly marginalized

and underrepresented in BCCIC's previous *Where Canada Stands* spotlight reports.[48] This chapter will not focus on the differential needs of women and girls, as this was undertaken in the previous chapter, but it will analyse academic and grey literature, as well as primary data from interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions with Indigenous youth, in order to discuss the situation and needs of marginalized persons from an intersectional and intergenerational lens.

Although this section will focus on marginalization, we recognize that within these groups, some individuals are more resilient and able to exercise more agency than others. Risk and resiliency factors (otherwise known as 'protective' factors) interact with each other in complex ways, thereby exerting moderating and mediating effects upon each other. It is difficult to make categorical statements about 'vulnerability' or draw causal conclusions about risk, because individuals respond differently to social stimuli depending on personal histories and proclivities, interpersonal relations, and contextual realities. Even among those 'furthest behind', there are individuals and groups who have the self-efficacy and resources required to act as agents of change—making decisions on matters that affect them, participating in development processes, and challenging social and economic injustice—and exhibiting great strength, resilience, and ingenuity in the process. Even though this chapter focuses on intersecting barriers and the effects of compounding or cumulative marginalization on so-called at-risk groups, we recognize the diverse way in which individuals and communities respond to adversity. All efforts have been made to highlight the diversity that exists within certain groups, but a detailed discussion of such differences is beyond the scope of this chapter.

In each section, innovative and promising practices will be showcased from Canada, in line with the overarching objective of the report. An initial review of online resources led to the shortlisting of programs, from which a select number were chosen in consultation with SDG experts. This is certainly not an exhaustive list as numerous other organizations are implementing innovative and effective programs across Canada.

## Children and youth in care (CYIC)

Children and Youth in the Canadian care system (CYIC) are at risk of being left behind in the 2030 Agenda, specifically in relation to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Studies have found that youth with a history in the care system are at risk of poor physical and mental health outcomes.[49] Findings also suggest that CYIC may have more difficulties in peer relationships,[50] and struggle inside the education system.[51] Youth often gain an upward trajectory in school once in care compared to pre-care, but research has shown that they are still at a significant disadvantage in completing high school. In British Columbia, only 55.1% of CYIC had their high school qualifications by the age of 19.[52] Similarly, CYIC in Manitoba performed the poorest academically in comparison to children who had never been placed in care.[53]

Indigenous youth make up the majority of the CYIC group, revealing Canada's failure to reduce systemic inequalities (SDG 10). Officials have recognized the disproportionate amount of Indigenous youth who are separated from their families as a result of financial, health, or housing challenges,[54] which underscores the government's failure to achieve targets related to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) in Indigenous communities. Indigenous youth are already discriminated against because of systemic racism and colonialism, and so their place within the care environment contributes to heightened levels of risk and marginalization. While Indigenous youth made up less than 7% of the Canadian population in 2018, they represented a disproportionate 52% of CYIC.[55] Research in Alberta suggests that Indigenous youth not only have a higher risk of being taken into care, but are also more likely to experience extreme risks in care than non-Indigenous youth in care.[56] In addition, research has found that Indigenous CYIC have poorer academic outcomes than non-Indigenous youth in care.[57] In British Columbia, Indigenous youth comprise the majority (65%) of CYIC, yet the graduation rate for Indigenous youth in care is less than half at 48.2%.[58]

What is particularly troubling about the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in care is its resemblance to the forcible removal of Indigenous youth from their families and placement in residential schools (1874-1970s) and then in non-Indigenous foster care homes ("sixties scoop"),[59] causing lasting impacts on Indigenous youth, families, communities, and culture.[60] Given that mandated reporters are often

institution-based (police, school employees, medical professionals, etc.), Indigenous youth may be further marginalized by fear that they will be treated unjustly or forcibly removed if they complain.[61] Furthermore, the removal of children and youth from their families may also sever ties to their cultural identities, especially if Canadian education reflects little in terms of Indigenous history and culture.

This risk has been recognized in the *Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families* (formerly Bill C-92), which was adopted at a Federal level on June 21, 2019.[62] The act recognizes the importance of youth staying connected with their culture, heritage, and community, if they must be separated, and acknowledges the importance of taking measures to ensure that Indigenous youth can remain within their families and communities, or return to them, if they have been removed unfairly.[63] This is affirmed in Canada's response to the UPR recommendations pertaining to the removal of Indigenous children and youth: "In Canada, there are legal obligations to respond to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. There may be times where it is essential that children are removed from their caregivers for their own health, safety and well-being. While every effort is made to prevent their removal, some exceptional cases occur".[64]

CYIC with disabilities also face diverse and intersecting challenges in relation to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). They are disproportionately represented in the care system as many have experienced maltreatment and neglect, as well as extreme poverty and/or homelessness prior to entering care. As a result of the high level of care that is required for youth with disabilities, CYIC with disabilities are more likely to experience frequent changes in their home care placements, which can have a negative effect on their overall development.[65] As such, specialized care and caregivers are needed. A Canadian study that focused on the foster parents of CYIC with disabilities found that the challenges of being a foster parent to youth with disabilities included inadequate funding and a range of attitudinal and structural barriers to access disability-responsive social work, health, and educational services. Compounding the challenges that CYIC face in the school system, foster parents noted that CYIC with disabilities could not access an appropriate level of support within their schools.[66]

Research has also found that there is a high percentage of CYIC who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. It is estimated that 10% of the general population is LGBTQIA2S+ but a recent Government of Canada report argues that the percentage in care is likely to be much higher because many LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth are rejected, neglected, or abused within their families as a result of their sexual orientations, gender identities and/or gender expressions. In care, these children and youth face unique challenges, such as not being able to identify an ally they can trust and not seeing their identity represented among social workers and caregivers. Some are placed into foster and group homes that are hostile to their gender identities and face discrimination and violence from their peers and caregivers. The report describes a lack of awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth in care by child protection workers and caregivers, inadequate LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion practices, and a dearth of information on promising practices that could guide policies and services.[67]

## Homelessness among youth

Individuals who experience homelessness have been left behind, specifically in relation to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).[68] The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) defines homelessness as "the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it". The COH categorizes the homeless population into three main categories: the unsheltered, the emergency-sheltered, and the provisionally accommodated.[69] As discussed in the previous section, many LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth have "no safe place to go", which has led to an overrepresentation of LGBTQIA2S+ youth in the homeless youth population in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada.[70] Witnesses cited in the Report of the Standing Committee on Health in Canada estimated that of the 40,000 homeless youth in Canada, between 25% and 40% identify as LGBTQIA2S+.[71]

A 2016 Statistics Canada report entitled *Hidden Homelessness in Canada* found that 8% of Canadians aged 15 and over reported that they had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car or elsewhere

because they had nowhere else to live. 25% of these had experienced physical and sexual abuse before the age of 15. 21% had moved at least four times in the previous five years and described lower levels of support. Canadians with a disability were more likely to have experienced hidden homelessness. Those who reported having a mental or psychological illness (21%) or a learning disability (20%) had the highest likelihood of reporting an experience of hidden homelessness. Those who reported at least three disabilities were four times more likely to have experienced hidden homelessness (26%) than those with no reported disability (6%).[72]

Studies have attributed the heightened risk of homelessness among youth with disabilities to the range of attitudinal and structural barriers that they face across the life course. Considering its international commitments to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child[73] and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),[74] Canada is obligated to create accessible built environments for youth with disabilities.[75] However, a 2017 survey has revealed that many schools and neighbourhoods are not accessible for children and youth with disabilities, creating numerous everyday barriers and contributing to feelings of exclusion and isolation.[76] Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are also more likely to live in homes and neighbourhoods with fewer resources, which can make disabled children more dependent on others. They are more likely to experience challenges in their transition from youth to adulthood, particularly in relation to post-secondary education, independent living, and employment.[77] Female youth with IDD have little access to information about sexual and reproductive health, as they are often excluded from sex education, either by the public education system or by their parents. Research has also found that children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities are at a significant risk of sexual assault by other youths, caregivers, family members, or strangers.[78] As a result of the plethora of intersecting barriers that youth with disabilities face, many are forced into a situation of homelessness or other precarious living arrangements, as was found in a study on homeless youth in Vancouver.[79]

*Source: Adam Thomas https://unsplash.com/photos/FB1n9kXP7WA*

## Youth and the justice system

SDG 16 calls for the promotion of "peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development" and the provision of "access to justice for all and build[ing] of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Positive steps have been taken to keep youth out of the justice system in Canada, especially with the replacement of the Young Offenders Act in 2003 with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, of which one of the main principles was the "fair and proportionate accountability that is consistent with the greater dependency of young persons and their reduced levels of maturity".[80] In youth court, 2016/2017 statistics show that only 13% of guilty cases saw incarceration; the rest received divergent penalties, such as rehabilitation programs and community service.[81] Canada's official response to the Universal Periodic Review report noted, "A minor may be detained or housed only in extremely limited circumstances after appropriate alternatives to detention are considered and determined to be unsuitable or unavailable".[82]

*Source: Warren Wong https://unsplash.com/photos/q5QXU-97_i0*

However, youth who are in the justice system have some of the worst life outcomes of any population in relation to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), particularly if they have a disability. The social and economic costs of youth incarceration are considerable: few complete high school or go on to further education,[83] the rate of recidivism is high,[84] and there is heightened risk of progression into the adult prison system.[85] For youth with multiple convictions, research has found that those who do enter or are at risk of entering into the justice system are more likely to have spent a period of time living in care,[86] experienced childhood exposure to parental substance use, or suffered emotional and physical abuse, as well as mental illness.[87] As a result, studies in Ontario and Vancouver have found that substance use and emotional and behavioural disorders are all common to youth prior to entering into the justice system.[88] Research in Canada and elsewhere has found that youth who have been incarcerated are also more likely to have been diagnosed with a learning disability, associated with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other learning difficulties than their non-incarcerated counterparts.[89] There is also a growing body of research on the overrepresentation of LGBTQIA2S+ youth in the juvenile justice system in the United States, pointing to the need for further research in Canada.[90]

The most disproportionately represented youth in the judicial system are Indigenous youth,[91] once again revealing systemic social and economic inequalities (SDG 10), as well as raising questions about fairness and impartiality within the justice system (SDG 16). Indigenous youth are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than non-indigenous youth in Canada.[92] While they account for 7% of the general youth population, Indigenous youth make up 33% of custody admissions. Furthermore, custody rates for administrative offences (e.g., hunting or driving without a license) are three times higher for Indigenous youth than their non-indigenous peers.[93] The disproportionate level of Indigenous youth in the justice system cannot be considered apart from the legacy of colonialism and the impact of socio-economic inequalities on Indigenous families and communities. It is also due to institutional racism, experienced at all levels of the justice system, from the report of a crime and the over-policing of Indigenous communities to the way the matter is dealt with in court.[94] Researchers have found that in Canada, law enforcement officials are more likely to respond to Indigenous youth through formal responses while non-indigenous youth are more likely to receive informal responses, including community service and diversion programs.[95] Restorative justice measures are in place for youth in the justice system, which includes consideration of an Indigenous youth's background at sentencing; however, researchers have argued that for Indigenous youth specifically, this is not enough.[96]

Although measures to tackle institutionalized racism and provide Indigenous communities with resources to support at-risk youth are essential, solutions must also include genuine and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and youth. Research has found that "helicoptering in" solutions to Indigenous-specific problems continues the rhetoric of colonialism and imposition. Instead, Indigenous communities would like their voices to be heard—their cultural traditions and values can benefit their youth in meaningful ways, while also working towards creating and maintaining strong Indigenous identities.[97]

## Innovative and promising practices

Established in British Columbia in 2019, The *Agreements with Young Adults Program* provides funding to help youth who have aged out of care with financial support if they are returning to school or attending rehabilitation, vocational, or approved life-skills programs. This program assists youth in care to transition into adulthood while maintaining their financial stability.[98]

*Youth in Care Canada:* This federal registered charity and not-for-profit organization acts as a body for the voice and opinions of youth and alumni youth in care. Their strategic plan for 2018-2021 includes increasing national awareness of CYIC, with a specific focus on disproportionately affected youth in care, including Indigenous youth and LGTBQIA2S+ youth, and engaging with youth in and from care through outreach activities and highly participatory programs. They hosted a gathering of 16 First Nations youth in/from care in Canada in October 2019 to discuss major issues faced by Indigenous youth in care.[99]

*Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks:* This provincial not-for-profit organization works to improve the lives of people in or from care between 14-24 years old. The Federation offers programs for youth to connect with other youth experiencing similar situations, build community connections, and identify challenges of being in care. It conducts youth retreats, provides scholarships (the 'Dream Fund'), and supports youth to transition into work and post-secondary education.[100]

## Socially Isolated Seniors

Seniors will make up a quarter of the Canadian population by 2036,[101] yet they are an increasingly vulnerable group within Canada, specifically in relation to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). Although great diversity exists within the senior population, research suggests that the aging process may lead to social isolation and loneliness—so much so that in 2016, the UK appointed a 'minister for loneliness'.[102] Canada has followed suit, with governmental collaboration on senior care and the creation of a 'Social Innovation Toolkit' for seniors.[103]

Social isolation can result from a myriad of physical changes and life events that happen during the aging process, such as the loss of a spouse or the onset of chronic illnesses or disabilities. It is also caused by age progression intersecting with other aspects of life, including lack of familial or spousal support, low incomes, mental health issues, chronic health problems, geographical isolation, as well as the social and structural barriers associated with ageism, disabilities, Indigenous peoples, immigration or refugee status, and gender identity and expression.[104] The feeling of isolation is exacerbated for seniors with disabilities. Approximately 43% of all seniors in Canada live with a disability, often related to mobility and pain.[105] They may experience marginalization and discrimination because of their age—as well as their disabilities—in an ableist society. Many seniors with disabilities have less social capital, have lower sources of income, and are more likely to be dependent on a family member or governing institution, which increases mental health issues and feelings of social isolation.[106]

*'The Strength of Age,' (Source: Philippe Leone, https://unsplash.com/)*

Loneliness and social isolation pose a health risk to seniors and create a positive-feedback loop: seniors who are socially isolated are more likely to experience depression, dementia, physical frailty, and a range of terminal illnesses.[107] Because of this, isolated seniors can become categorized as frail and require increased care, which further affects their independence, social participation, and sense of belonging.[108] In Canada, frail individuals make up 5-15% of the population and use a high level of health services.[109] Frail seniors often receive ineffective and short-term care, which is hindered by poor levels of communication with their physicians.[110] Currently, there are gaps in support that would assist seniors to engage in their own health and health care. Providing healthcare services and community support to seniors in western Canada would not only help engage seniors in self-care management but would also save the nation a projected $210 million annually, keeping seniors out of emergency rooms unless necessary.[111]

Health care issues are exacerbated for seniors living in rural areas or remote communities. Research using data from the 2016 Canadian census determined that there were twice as many nurses per 1000 seniors in urban Canadian centers than in rural ones, and there were three times as many physicians per 1000 seniors in urban than in rural settings. In fact, the urban-rural gap of availability in physicians is greater in Canada that in other OECD countries.[112] Socio-economic status has a significant effect on senior's wellbeing. Researchers have found that many seniors face serious financial and logistical problems. Pension plans are often insufficient to meet their needs, and many seniors do not have access to information that will help them navigate the bureaucracy surrounding the issuance of their pension plans. Many are forced to live in lower income housing as was found in Vancouver's Inner City.[113] Lower income housing contributes to social isolation because of safety issues in neighbourhoods, as well as posing an impact on emotional, physical, and mental well-being. Studies in Canada have also shown that seniors in poor neighbourhoods and seniors with lower social capital are also more likely to experience victimization at the hands of family members or through unknown individuals.[114]

In Canada, seniors from Indigenous communities experience disproportionately poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous seniors. In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, James Anaya, noted gaps in health outcomes of Indigenous as compared to non-Indigenous Canadians, specifically with regards to life expectancy, infant mortality, suicide, injuries, communicable and chronic diseases. He argued that these health outcomes have been exacerbated by socio-economic factors in Indigenous communities, such as overcrowded housing, high poverty rates, and geographical remoteness. He also critiqued poorly coordinated health services for Indigenous communities at federal, provincial, and territorial levels.[115] These findings were echoed in Amanda Meawasige and John Millar's chapter on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) in BCCIC's *Where Canada Stands* series. They attributed the prevalence of cancer and chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease and diabetes), as well as mental health challenges, to socio-economic determinants associated with stress, poverty, and inadequate housing. They critiqued the health system's failure to develop upstream prevention approaches and ensure equitable access to primary health care, which they attributed to jurisdictional ambiguity, siloed approaches, inadequate service provision, and the lack of data to understand Indigenous communities health needs.[116]

As a result of these barriers to health care, research estimates that 52% of Indigenous seniors now live in off-reserve population centers, primarily to gain access to adequate health care. This increases the risk of social isolation as seniors move away from communities that share their culture, language, and histories. Such relocation also increases the risk of neglect, maltreatment, mental health challenges, and self-harming behaviour.[117] Seniors and community elders play an important role in protecting and keeping Indigenous languages and cultures alive, so systemic marginalization adds even more to their isolation.[118] Indigenous seniors also reported exclusion within community events for seniors that were not specifically targeted at Indigenous groups.[119] Research has shown the importance of incorporating culture into rehousing, rehabilitation, and care for Indigenous seniors. Consulting with Indigenous elders on how best to assist seniors within their communities is imperative. No one knows the vulnerability of a specific group as intimately as a member of that group.

There is a dearth of research on seniors (aged 65+) who identity as members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community in Canada. Limited research suggests that they are at risk of being left behind because of poorer health outcomes[120] and attitudinal barriers within seniors communities.[121] They are also likely to experience other

intersecting axes of discrimination related to ageism, sexism, or HIV/AIDS status.[122] In a study undertaken on seniors in the LGBTQIA2S+ community in Canada, many noted that they lived in an economically precarious situation and could not plan for future care. They also mentioned anxieties about the aging process and health care, as past experiences and perceptions of the Canadian healthcare system left them with negative views and a distrust of the system.[123] LGBTQIA2S+ seniors also have limited social networks and the senior community often does not accept their gender or sexual orientation.[124] They face discrimination in care homes and in healthcare facilities,[125] which may push them further into social isolation. LGBTQIA2S+ seniors who experience social isolation report more challenges with depression, morbidity, and increased mortality.[126] Social isolation can also affect their access to care[127] and can make them more susceptible to maltreatment and social exclusion as a result of their gender identities, especially in long-term care homes.[128]

## Innovative and promising practices

*Allies in Aging:* A collective impact initiative to support seniors to help them stay connected, engage in social activities, and continue to maintain social support networks. The focus is on intersectionality and the identification of seniors at risk of social isolation as a result of disabilities, low socio-economic status, or language/cultural barriers. The initiative brought together four lead agencies to start neighbourhood and community projects using a highly participatory approach to senior engagement. The Seniors Hub and Welcoming Seniors' Spaces helped seniors connect with other seniors and their communities at a local level. Seniors on the Move focused primarily on improving transportation options for seniors and included advocacy for systems change. Lastly, Volunteer Impact provided training for volunteers and service providers to help them identify seniors who are experiencing social isolation and ways that they can provide further support.[129]

*The Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation (CABHI)* is a collaborative group made up of partners from health care, academia, industry, NPOs, and government, whose aim is to improve the quality of life of seniors through innovation. Their objective is to enable the aging population to age safely in the setting of their choice, and to support their emotional and physical well-being. In partnership with the private sector, they help innovators develop and share their ideas for seniors. CABHI held a 'What's Next Canada?' conference in March 2019 that focused entirely on how much seniors would benefit from the proper integration of technology, which includes the ability to maintain their independence through personal health management and social networks. The conference included a contest that featured small start-up companies competing to receive funding from CABHI for their senior-based technologies. Funding has been allocated with intersectionality and LNOB in mind. For instance, the Alzheimer Society of London and Middlesex' Rural Support program was funded to support isolated seniors in outlying areas. Laser Walk was funded to help low-mobility seniors and seniors with disabilities overcome barriers in movement.[130]

*STAR (Seniors Transportation Access and Resources):* This organization focuses on providing transportation programs for seniors developed and implemented through a multi-stakeholder collaboration approach. Established in 2011, some of their newer projects include the development of a Seniors Transportation Hub and Hotline, which provides a centralized location for information for seniors, their families, and people in the service sector. This initiative used a participatory approach to understand seniors' transportation needs when planning and monitoring projects.[131]

*First Nations Elder Care Course:* Developed by the Saint Elizabeth First Nations, Inuit and Metis Program, this program provides care, health solutions, and education to Indigenous communities in Canada. Specifically, the course provides caregivers with a knowledge base on how to care for the unique needs of First Nations Elders. The course was designed in consultation with Indigenous people and targets the specific needs of Indigenous seniors living in remote communities.[132]

## Discrimination and violence: LGBTQIA2S+ Communities

Individuals who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ are at risk of being left behind in the 2030 Agenda according to the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, which referred to the violence and multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination that they face globally, including based on age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and social status.[133] Research suggests that Canada is not the exception when considering the discrimination experienced by LGBTQIA2S+ persons.

Gender and sexual minorities in Canada are more likely to report intimate partner violence, which can adversely affect their work, mental health, and quality of life.[134] Transgender and trans femme people experience higher amounts of violence and discrimination in Canada.[135] Research also indicates that gender diverse employees in Canada's federal public service are between 2.2 and 2.5 times more likely to experience workplace discrimination and harassment than their cisgender colleagues. With the exception of people with disabilities, gender diverse employees have the highest rates of self-reported employment discrimination and harassment compared to cisgender women, Indigenous peoples, and visible minorities.[136] A recent House of Commons report noted that many transgender youth struggle to secure employment because they have not necessarily changed their legal names or modified their identification cards, and that many trans individuals face discrimination in the workplace.[137] A 2019 study on trans people in Ontario found that 50% of the 2,000 people surveyed lived in low-income neighbourhoods, compared with 37% of the general population. The report also cited the findings of a 2017 Pan Canadian Health Inequalities study that found bisexual Canadians are three times more likely to be food insecure than heterosexual individuals.[138]

The targets related to SDG 3 (Health and Well-being) are also elusive for this community. Individuals, who identify within the LGTBQIA2S+ community in Ontario are at risk for various mental health issues,[139] including substance abuse, depression, anxiety, suicide, and self-harm.[140] A recent *Report of the Standing Committee on Health in Canada* (2019) found that although health inequities are experienced differently by different individuals and groups, often as a result of the intersection of age, ethnic origin, income, and access to health, overall LGBTQIA2S+ communities are more likely to develop mental health disorders, have suicidal thoughts, and attempt suicide than heterosexual Canadians. Specifically, lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to suffer chronic diseases and gay, bisexual, and MSM are more at risk of anal cancer and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) than heterosexual counterparts.[141] Homelessness and under-housing among the LGBTQIA2S+ community is a contributing factor to poor health outcomes.[142] According to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, 20% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQIA2S+.[143]

*Source: Josh Wilburne, https://unsplash.com/*

These poor health outcomes cannot be seen apart from structural inequities in Canada's health system. Research in Canada suggests that LGBTQIA2S+ people have poorer access to health care and are less likely to have their healthcare concerns met by doctors.[144] As was noted in a House of Commons Report, many LGBTQIA2S+ persons report barriers within the health care system related to poorly trained health care providers, as well as overt discrimination, delays, and refusals to serve—particularly among the trans population, who lack options for gender affirming surgery.[145]

LGBTQIA2S+ individuals with disabilities experience the compounded effects of ableism and gender discrimination; however, there is little research in Canada on what these intersecting axes mean for people living with disabilities within the LGBTQIA2S+ community.[146] Studies conducted elsewhere have found that these individuals experience high levels of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which has an adverse effect on their access to social

supports.[147] Practitioners in Canada have noted that disabled LGBTQIA2S+ youth may be excluded from LGBTQIA2S+ communities due to poor accessibility in queer spaces and because they may be reliant on caregivers who are not supportive of their gender identities or sexual orientations.[148]

LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth's access to a quality education (SDG 4) is also hindered as a result of their gender and sexual identification or expression. In 2016, Bill C-16 added gender identity or expression to the Canadian Human Rights Act[149]. This addition is considered a strong step forward in recognizing gender as a spectrum and affirming an individual's ability to identify outside of the heteronormative conventions of male and female as a basic human right. For youth specifically, this legislation has encouraged the development of similar policies in school systems—a space in which a large majority of youth spend most of their time. For example, in British Columbia, sexual orientation and gender identity were successfully incorporated into the Schools Act (Bill 27, 2016).[150] BC's New Curriculum, which was rolled out in 2018, states that "teachers should ensure that classroom instruction, assessment and resources reflect sensitivity to diversity and incorporate positive role portrayals, relevant issues, and themes such as inclusion, respect, and acceptance".[151] However, research has found that on a national level, the school policy response has been very tentative compared to actual societal changes on these issues.[152]

*Source: Denin Lawley https://unsplash.com/photos/ThXxRNDdSt4*

Research undertaken in Ontario found that over half of the 34 English public secular school boards have no publicly accessible policy for school staff, students, or families to adhere to in order to prevent discrimination based on a youth's gender expression and gender identity. Further, the term "gender expression" is often omitted from policy and board-wide structural reports.[153] While the study focused on Ontario's school board, researchers suggested that they likely reflected a country-wide pattern and that these policy gaps have meant that schools are not a "safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective" place of learning for LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth. This is evident in statistics provided by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which indicate that 36% of trans youth report being physically threatened or injured at school.[154] Research on high school completion in Alberta found that sexual minority and gender variant students frequently experience verbal, sexual, and physical violence, which is associated with lower grades, school absences, and lower expectations to finish high school. It has an effect on their motivation and concentration and often leads to school avoidance tactics.[155]

Research has found that LGBTQIA2S+ youth who identified with other visible minorities were more at risk than their peers, experiencing higher likelihoods of poverty and homelessness.[156] A House of Commons report noted that two-spirit or Indigenous people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ face "different" levels of discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, in intersection with their Indigenous origins and their health (e.g., if they have an HIV positive status or Hepatitis C). They may also face discrimination within Indigenous communities.[157] As was discussed in the previous section, LGBTQIA2S+ seniors also face intersecting structural and attitudinal barriers. This is as a reminder that a "one-size fits all" approach for gender-based violence and discrimination is ill-advised, because risk (and resilience) is influenced by a complex interplay of highly contextual and situational, macro, interpersonal and individual factors that inform the unique way in which barriers, disadvantages and vulnerabilities intersect for particular individuals based on their identities, positioning and personal biographies.

## Innovative and promising practices

*Youth Project:* This not-for-profit organization in Nova Scotia provides support and services to youths aged 25 years old and under, who are dealing with challenges related to their gender identity and sexual orientation. It also aims to educate the general public in order to make Nova Scotia a safer place for LGBTQIA2S+ youth. Their GSA Conference, which is an annual, one-day event for youth in Nova Scotia, includes workshops, talks, and activities for students that center around relevant issues for LGBTQIA2S+ youths. In addition to counselling and referrals, the Project also runs student-led clubs and other weekly activities that provide information as well as a network of support and community for students who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. The Youth Project also provides classroom workshops in schools and offers professional development workshops for professionals, university programs and organizations.[158]

*QMUNITY:* A Vancouver-based not-for-profit focused on improving the lives of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit peoples. It provides a safe space for individuals and their allies to fully express themselves. The organization supports individuals through free counselling services, information and referral services, as well as one-on-one youth support. In addition, the organization provides advisory and consulting services for businesses, schools, educators, and providers to best work with LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and to help support and facilitate safe workplaces, schools, and community spaces. With intersectionality in mind, the organization provides support to LGBTQIA2S+ seniors and Indigenous LGBTQIA2S+ persons, through programs that focus on community connection, social support, and personal development.[159]

*Center for Sexuality:* This Calgary organization delivers programs and services to help normalize discussions about sexuality and sexual health and their cross over with the LGBTQIA2S+ community through gender identity, human rights issues, sexual orientation, consent, and equality. It pioneered the WiseGuyz program, which is directed at male youth and facilitates discussions about consent, sexual health, violence, homophobia, and bullying. WiseGuyz is a weekly program for male youth that works to foster positive relationships with partners, family members, and friends, and helps men understand the connection between masculinity and sexual violence. Annual research reports suggest that the organization has had positive outcomes, in terms of awareness-raising, promotion of sexual health, and prevention of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.[160]

*Egale:* This organization aims to improve the lives of LGBTQIA2S+ people in Canada through public engagement. It also engages in outreach to help create safer spaces for schools, workplaces, and government institutions. Staff provide information and services to people to help raise awareness of issues faced by LGBTQIA2S+ individuals.[161]

## Newcomers

'Newcomers' in Canada were identified as an at-risk group in Canada's interim national SDG strategy, which does not clearly distinguish between the differential needs of immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrant workers.[162] This section does not do justice to these differences but will attempt to highlight some of the barriers that certain groups face in relation to the SDGs, specifically in relation to the negative impact of stigma, discrimination, and violence on SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

In terms of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), there are significant wage gaps between immigrants and native-born Canadians in almost all occupational fields.[163] Although there are differences in labour force participation, unemployment rates, and wage gaps among immigrants of different nationalities and identifications, racialized immigrants tend to earn less than non-racialized immigrants, according to the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), which identified an "unequivocal pattern of racialized economic inequality in Canada".[164] Even within the

category of racialized immigrants, certain groups and individuals experience higher wage gaps based on the intersection of gender, race, and nationality (e.g., women who identified as Black and men who identified as Filipino) than the average for racialized workers.[165] Those who do have access to high wage positions often face discrimination and racism from colleagues and management, which serves to further entrench dominant socio-economic hierarchies.[166] Referring to a "racialized regime of skills", Guo (2015) found that racialized immigrants from specific ethnic and national origins experience deskilling upon arrival in Canada. Their foreign credentials, job skills, and work experience are devalued by discriminatory labour markets and hiring practices that force them to resort to unpaid or low paying jobs to gain Canadian work experience.[167] Authors have also highlighted the risk of exploitation faced by Temporary Foreign Workers, who are hired to fill employment gaps in low wage sectors. Their right to remain in Canada is entirely at the behest of their employers, which leads to a situation of dependence and vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.[168]

Immigrants with disabilities face numerous challenges integrating into Canadian society and often experience discrimination in the workplace based on race, nationality, and disability. Researchers argue that intersecting discrimination compounds the challenges that immigrants with disabilities face, which has an adverse effect on their quality of life.[169] This is further exacerbated for female immigrants with disabilities, who face greater attitudinal and structural barriers than their male counterparts in work and community environments, as was found among immigrant women living with visual impairments in Canada.[170] Development practitioners have also observed that immigrants and refugees who are disabled or live with chronic illnesses often lack support within their own communities.[171]

Newcomers also experience persistent inequalities with regards to SDG 3 (Health and Well-being). Many newcomers to Canada struggle to build social supports and social networks because of language barriers, employment barriers, lack of ethnocultural diversity within local community organizations, and social discrimination.[172] This lack of social support can have serious implications for their sense of belonging and psychosocial well-being, as was found in studies on immigrants in urban Canadian contexts.[173] Furthermore, racialized immigrants have distinct health needs that need to be understood. A recent report by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) argued that more research is needed to "explore the myriad differences and distinct needs within immigrant and racialized populations and how these relate to mental health and health outcomes".[174] The Commission recommended that government invest in the consistent collection of sociodemographic data to understand the relationship between race, migration, and other aspects of identity in relation to inequitable access to health systems, and then develop responses to address these inequities in health and mental health.[175]

*Source: Jorge Gil https://unsplash.com/photos/pRugcdOnClQ*

In general, researchers have found that immigrants in Canada face numerous barriers in the healthcare system, for example under-screening and under-diagnoses of health problems such as cancer.[176] These barriers are caused by many factors. At a structural level, experts have identified a lack of cultural awareness and service delivery in first languages, as well as systematic discrimination, as barriers facing newcomers trying to access the healthcare system. These barriers are exacerbated for refugees. For instance, researchers critiqued the lack of coordination among health and social welfare agencies across federal, provincial, and municipal scales, and the absence of 'culturally competent care'.[177] Many health professionals have not received training on how to reflectively consider their own cultural attitudes and behaviour and then modify them to improve the quality of care they provide to refugees. This includes offering translator services, taking the time to build up trust with their patients, reconstructing refugees' medical histories, and considering socio-cultural factors that might affect the disclosure of these medical histories.

Disclosure may be more challenging for refugees in Canada, many of whom do not have the English vocabulary required to discuss their health conditions, may feel uncomfortable talking to health practitioners of the opposite gender as a result of cultural and religious norms, are dealing with complex economic and social priorities, have experienced physical and sexual violence, and may be facing very specific mental health challenges related to forced migration. Instead of receiving "culturally appropriate care", they are subjected to linguistically and culturally insensitive health practitioners, rushed appointments, long waiting lists, and health care clinics that are not willing to take on new patients.[178] Many refugees do not have access to costly and often irregular transportation, forcing them to miss health appointments[179] or miss the social interaction programs that are offered by CSOs for mental health purposes. For Refugee Claimants, fear of being reported to authorities is also a barrier to quality health care. Furthermore, their status bars them from Canada's "universal" healthcare system, as they are not able to access primary, emergency, preventative, or palliative care.[180] Experts have argued that further research is needed to understand the differential experiences and needs of refugees, and how their country of origin, forced migration and post-arrival experiences, have an affect on their health needs and access to equitable health services.

LGTBQIA+-identifying[181] immigrants also face unique challenges, particularly if they identify with a racialized or ethnic community. A systematic review of 33 studies in Canada found that LGBTQIA+ persons described their racial and ethnic minority identities as a source of 'double discrimination', and that this led to feelings of social exclusion within their own racial and ethnic communities, as well as experiences of microaggressions within LGTBQIA2S+ communities as a result of their racial and ethnic identities. Deleterious psychological and physical health outcomes were observed, particularly for immigrants whose high expectations of Canadian liberties were dashed by experiences of physical and verbal abuse in Canada.[182] For example, one study found that Chinese gay-identifying immigrants in Canada found it difficult to reconcile high levels of discrimination and racism with their expectations of a "queer-friendly nation".[183] Studies have suggested that many LGTBQIA+ immigrants choose their local LGTBQIA+ community as their main acculturation community, relinquishing their ethnic community in order to avoid having to deny some aspect of their identity.[184] However, the loss of ethnic, religious and/or cultural ties can have a negative impact on psychosocial well-being. Researchers have found that refugees who identify as LGTBQIA+ also struggled with mental health and tended to avoid members of the diaspora community, religious institutions, and mainstream LGTBQIA2S+ organizations.[185] Studies focusing on LGBTQIA+-identifying immigrant groups found that their specific needs and priorities were largely ignored in official processes.[186] For instance, a House of Commons report noted that trans immigrants experienced specific barriers when applying for permanent residence because they are required to consult with a psychiatrist as part of what already tends to be a "long, stressful and costly process".[187]

Immigrant seniors face numerous barriers in Canada, particularly in relation to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Immigrants make up 30% of Canada's older population, but face challenges of resettlement. As a population that requires the best access to health care, immigrant seniors often underutilize health services and have cited multiple access barriers related to language, cost, lack of health insurance, location, and socio-economic status.[188] Immigrant seniors also show a higher prevalence of chronic diseases compared to non-immigrants and are susceptible to social isolation and loneliness.[189] Low socio-economic status is also at play. Many immigrants are disqualified from Canadian pension plans[190] or have trouble accessing information regarding their pension plans because of language barriers or the inaccessibility of information.[191] Furthermore, as previously mentioned, immigrants tend to have lower socio-economic status and carry that status with them into retirement. The factors that trigger social isolation for immigrant and refugee seniors have negative health impacts, such as higher rates of depression, social anxiety, and other mental health issues. They are also less likely to access health services in a timely manner if they are socially isolated, which results in higher rates of health care utilization and hospitalization over the long term. Furthermore, social isolation can also lead to the maltreatment and financial abuse of seniors.[192]

## Innovative and promising practices

*PeaceGeeks:* This not-for-profit organization based in Vancouver, BC, provides technological tools and digital literacy training to members of communities affected by conflict and displacement to help them start up various initiatives. Staff help immigrants, refugees, and displaced people connect with services and support in an accessible format and help them with the resettlement process. One of their current projects is called Arrival Advisor—a free mobile app that helps refugees and immigrants in BC find information about settlement matters. Their Services Advisor project is a web app that connects refugees with humanitarian services in their home country.[193]

*MOSAIC:* A Canadian organization that focuses on the settlement of immigrants, refugees, and migrants in the Greater Vancouver area and across British Columbia. Through in-person services, outreach, and online services, this organization provides information for new settlers and helps them connect with assistance, employment, community building programs, legal services, refugee services etc. Furthermore, marginalized groups are identified through outreach programs that recognize intersecting barriers, such as migrant youth, migrant seniors, LGTBQIA+ migrants etc. The MOSAIC Seniors Club is a program that offers activities targeted at newly settled seniors who may be experiencing isolation due to a loss of social networks, language difficulties, and cultural barriers. Their "I Belong" program supports LGBTQIA+ newcomers through discussion of the unique issues that this minority group faces. They also offer a 'Trans Newcomer Online Resource Hub' to advertise resources available in Vancouver and British Columbia. They carefully consider "minorities within a minority group" by evaluating the very individualized and unique issues that immigrants and refugees face in relation to other barriers of social marginalization.[194]

*Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC):* This organization provides a supportive environment for newcomers in Canada by assisting with their settlement, language, and socio-economic needs. It receives all government-assisted refugees to BC, is a hub for refugee claimants, hosts the only legal clinic for immigrants and refugees in BC, and is the only BC site for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). The HIPPY program includes weekly in-home support and training from a visitor, the provision of children's books and lesson kits, and group meetings and talks. Generally, this organization works within an inclusive framework in order to integrate and support individuals to become self-sufficient, by understanding their unique needs and aspirations. LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) is a free English class program to help remove the language barriers faced by many immigrants. Community Connections encourages individuals to engage in community events while also meeting other newcomers. This helps them gain experience within the community and fosters strong social connections to help support new settlements.[195]

*DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society* supports and empowers immigrants and refugees through the provision of wrap-around services and specialized programs for migrant populations that are strength-based, responsive to community, and utilize an intersectionality lens. This is evident in its Together Now Program, supporting LGBTQIA+ migrants, and its culturally responsive clinical counselling services, language, resettlement, family and youth, and gender-based programs and community development initiatives.[196]

*Rainbow Railroad:* a Canadian charity that helps LGBTQIA+ people escape state-sponsored violence by providing them with funding, transportation, and trip planning to leave the country, as well as support to help individuals establish themselves in their new countries.[197]

# OPERATIONALIZING THE LNOB PLEDGE

An interim *LNOB UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams*, provides useful and practical insights on how LNOB can be operationalized.[198] It adapts a human rights—based approach (HRBA) programming tool for LNOB, in order to provide a methodology to turn the guiding principle and overarching vision of LNOB into action. As many countries have committed to HRBA, this tool anchors LNOB in a system of rights and corresponding obligations already established by international law. The UNSDG Operational Guide proposes a five-step process and adopts meaningful consultation with those who are left behind or at risk of being left behind as a cross-cutting action.

| LNOB Steps | Description |
|---|---|
| **Step 1a: Evidence gathering** | This involves gathering and analyzing data, gaps, and trends in SDG implementation between sub-populations and/or geographic localities, focusing on human rights, gender, and identity. It requires integrating and triangulating data from a range of sources, including national government statistics, human rights institutions, women's organizations, and community-level data.[199] To fill data gaps, the guide suggests qualitative research, people-driven data, digital platforms (e.g., GIS mapping), and microdata from different sources (e.g., purposive sampling for small surveys). Participatory consultations and feedback mechanisms are encouraged to support meaningful participation. The UN guidelines on ethical considerations relating to data should also be considered carefully in this step to ensure the privacy, safety, and well-being of all participants.[200] |
| **Step 1b: Analysis** | The data should be analyzed using a five-factor framework (discrimination, geography, vulnerability to shocks, governance, socio-economic status), and should consider wider causal and contributing factors that disproportionately affect a particular group in order to understand who, among those who are left behind, faces severe and/or intersecting deprivations and disadvantages or multiple forms of discrimination. This will elucidate who is "furthest left behind". A multidimensional approach is also proposed in order to consider those furthest behind in relation to multiple SDGs or specific "deprivations clusters".[201] |
| **Step 2: Prioritization and analysis** | In this step, policy makers and development agents should prioritize the most critical challenges based on who is the furthest behind. The analysis should consider underlying root causes that may lead to problems in relation to multiple SDGs, the extent of inequalities between and within population groups, the spatial dimensions of these inequalities, and the failure of national or local policies to reach specific subsets of the population. This operational guide proposes the use of an HRBA approach to undertake this analysis. This approach has three steps for analyzing and assessing who is left behind and why they have been left behind, namely causality analysis, role analysis, and capacity gap analysis. Causal analysis or problem tree analysis considers root, underlying, and immediate causes of deprivation and discrimination. Role (or pattern) analysis is used to identify duty bearers and rights holders. Finally, capacity gap analysis explores what is preventing duty bearers from fulfilling their duties, as well as the capacity gaps preventing rights holders from claiming their rights.[202] |
| **Step 3: Decision-making** | Policy makers and practitioners should use the information gathered from Step 2 to identify actions to address the challenges, barriers, capacity gaps, and root causes. Interventions include advocacy, capacity development, supporting civil society, community empowerment, improving the quality and accessibility of services, and strengthening CSO partnerships. These actions should be prioritized based on a commitment to address the furthest behind first. It is also important to consider SDG accelerators—actions that will have "multiplying impacts not only for the specific group, but for broader society across multiple goals and targets".[203] |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** | In this step, it is important to identify and contextualize LNOB indicators and targets after considering available data and data gaps. The monitoring plan should use quantitative and qualitative indicators that speak to structural or commitment indicators, process or effort indicators, and outcome or result indicators. The guidance document encourages the use of innovative ways of tracking, visualizing, and sharing information. It also recommends the development of the capacity of governments (national and sub-national) and CSOs to monitor inequalities.[204] |
| **Step 5: Accountability** | The document provides guidelines for integrating LNOB in SDG follow-up and review processes, including national SDG Reports and VNRs to the HLPF. It also describes the importance of supporting national accountability to people left behind, and suggests including recommendations from international human rights mechanisms in plans to monitor, review, and report on implementation of national plans; mapping existing government and non-governmental organizations or networks; ensuring transparency in resource allocation; prioritizing the review of national plans; and creating an enabling environment for civil society.[205] |

# CONCLUSION

This chapter falls within Step 1a as outlined in the *LNOB UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams*. It has gathered and analyzed data from a range of sources on SDG implementation, including reports published by the government, human rights institutions, and civil society organizations, as well as interviews with stakeholders, and consultations with Indigenous youth. It has carefully considered the differences experienced by different sub-groups, with a focus on human rights, gender, social justice, and identity. The cross-referencing of data and comprehensive review of this chapter by more than 10 reviewers from diverse civil society organizations has validated the findings. The next step would be to use some of the analytical mapping tools proposed in the guidance document to determine who is the "furthest left behind" in relation to specific SDG clusters. While such mapping is beyond the scope of this chapter, the contents do respond directly to the federal SDG Unit's call for information on who is being left behind, why they are left behind, and what some of their needs are.

Although much of this chapter has focused on risk, vulnerability, and marginalization, it is important to adopt an appreciative assets-based approach that recognizes the resilience and strengths of those who are considered 'furthest behind'. Many display creative agency as they devise everyday strategies of resistance to navigate the plethora of structural and interpersonal barriers that hinder their access to resources and services. It is equally important to consider the diversity that exists within groups who are considered vulnerable or at risk, as well as the way that intersecting barriers and opportunity structures are influenced by personal biographies, structural positionings, interpersonal relations, and multiple, intersecting identifications.

Interventions seeking to promote equity and empowerment should start from an in-depth understanding of 'difference' and the 'multi-positioned subject' in relations of social differentiation. They must also perceive how this multipositionality leads to complex configurations of identity constructions and interrelationships, as well as highly contextualized and situational power dynamics. This complexity and fluidity requires nuance and innovation in terms of the way that disaggregated data is collected and analysed in order to identify those 'furthest' behind and in need of prioritization. In order to capture this complexity, it is imperative to include the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders and provide opportunities for underrepresented and marginalized individuals to participate and play an ownership role in the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs that seek to leave no one behind.

This chapter has considered LNOB from an intergenerational perspective by reflecting on the different experiences of marginalized groups across the life course and the differential and intersectional

barriers that they face. However, this analysis should be taken even further in order to consider the relational and temporal nature of each of the life stages discussed and what this means for those at risk of being left behind.[206] Integrating this longitudinal perspective into SDG programs will require reflection and dialogue on the notion of 'being' and 'becoming', and what this means for temporal cohesion and the future of our planet, as our actions today will have an impact on generations to come and indeed our own lives as we transition through the life course.

It is also important to think through the semantics of the LNOB pledge and the meaning that it holds for certain individuals and groups. Being 'left behind' evokes an action that may be accidental or random, but history has demonstrated that in fact, certain populations, such as Indigenous people, have been systematically and purposefully excluded from development processes. This term may serve to alienate rather than include those whose input is essential for effective and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, it is necessary to acknowledge that progress is not linear: there is no single path that those who are 'left behind' should take in order to move forward; there is no single door that needs to be opened in order to 'let them in'; and there is no single group who has the authority or power to 'let them in'. Rather it is through the creation of spaces and mechanisms that allow for the incubation of innovation among diverse stakeholders that alternative doors can be identified and opened together. It is also through the recognition that those 'left behind' may in fact be further ahead in terms of moral or thought leadership, that we can start harnessing our collective strengths to develop creative solutions in this Decade of Action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Translate the LNOB Actions proposed in Canada's interim SDG strategy into **concrete commitments**, actions, partnerships, and initiatives accompanied by action plans, clear timelines, budget lines, and accountability mechanisms, and do this in meaningful consultation with marginalized and underrepresented individuals and groups. The SDG Unit should participate in peer-to-peer learning processes involving counterpart units in other countries, as well as work closely with LNOB experts from the UN, in order to learn how to mainstream and foreground LNOB in the national strategy, drawing on international, national, and grassroots best practices. The strategy should also be informed by the recommendations of international human rights committees, CSO reports, and other forms of community-driven data.
- Develop mechanisms for **multi-stakeholder engagement** on the cross-cutting issue of leave no one behind and ensure that vulnerable and marginalized persons can participate equitably in these multi-stakeholder engagement modalities and governance structures. Ensure that marginalized and underrepresented groups are represented and can participate in the proposed External Advisory Committee of Experts and the national SDG Forum.
- Ensure vertical and horizontal **policy coherence** by integrating LNOB in strategies, policies, and programs across federal and sub-national departments and agencies. Ensure alignment of LNOB Actions in the strategy with those of the Feminist International Assistance Policy and other relevant laws and policies. Localization strategies should include LNOB in coordination mechanisms, partnerships, M&E, and reporting.
- Provide **capacity building** on LNOB tools, methods, and approaches to federal and sub-national officials. House LNOB materials and resources in an online SDG Hub and encourage mentoring, action-learning, and peer-to-peer learning at sub-national levels on LNOB policies and programs.

- **Innovative and flexible financing tools**, such as an LNOB catalyst fund, should foreground LNOB when selecting recipients. Provide resources to grassroots organizations that develop evidence-informed, tailored, and holistic programs and projects that address the needs of the poorest and most marginalized, and which address the root causes of inequality, discrimination, and violence from a systems perspective. Support transformative approaches that proactively address the root causes of vulnerability and marginalization, as well as approaches that have an SDG multiplier or accelerator effect.
- Strengthen the **Canadian Indicator Framework**. More work needs to be done to ensure that this framework captures the rights and needs of those who are being left behind. Furthermore, the framework should include transformational change indicators, as well as indicators that capture interlinkages between and across the goals. This will reveal gaps as well as trade offs, synergies, and spillover effects that will have an impact on poor, vulnerable, and marginalized persons in Canada and beyond its borders. Review the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Multi-Deprivation Index for implementing the leave no one behind pledge.[207] The report by the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development (November 7, 2018) provides a useful discussion on disaggregating indicators in relation to persons living with disabilities.[208]
- Establish working groups to engage with the challenges associated with the ethical **collection of inclusive and disaggregated data** on LNOB. For this purpose, review the disaggregated data collection framework and methodology proposed by the UN Stats Division,[209] as well as the data collection and analytical tools suggested by the *LNOB UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams*.[210]
- **Consistently engage with communities and people who are left behind.** Commit to meaningful engagement and inclusive policy making and allow for participatory methodologies at all stages of the policy cycle in order to incorporate the capacities, views, and priorities of underrepresented individuals and groups. They should play a central role in strengthening the interim national strategy, monitoring progress, and informing national and VNR reporting. Seats should be also allocated to underrepresented persons in delegations attending the HLPF.
- **Public engagement**, "storytelling", and calls to action should include LNOB as content but should also showcase the way that those who are classified as 'left behind' act as agents of change, contributing to development processes and fighting for social justice, as is evident among Indigenous youth across Canada.

# LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INDIGENOUS YOUTH (VIDEA)[211]

Indigenous youth across Canada—and across the world—are using their voices and standing up to call for clean water, environmental protections, and respect for Indigenous knowledge. The Wet'suwet'en's ongoing occupation of their traditional territories is a timely example of Indigenous people asserting their own rights and sovereignty, demanding justice, and demonstrating what that justice should look like. Nations across Canada have mobilized and participated in ceremonies and actions demonstrating true solidarity. From blockading trains on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in Ontario to occupying the steps of the British Columbia Legislature on Lekwungen Territory in Victoria, BC, and many other actions across so-called Canada, Indigenous Nations are calling for justice and instructing non-Indigenous Canadians on how they can support and act in solidarity with these efforts.

> *"The protests and blockades are not just fighting for a better future for our First Nations children, but all Creator's children. Every child on Mother Earth deserves clean water, and a clean Mother Earth. We are fighting for this in ways in peace and we are trying to be Seen, Heard, and Understood. The negative side effect of this is the blame, hate, and anger we get from fighting for everyone's rights. It's dangerous to be out there, we take risks every time we go on a protest, to help out at a blockade. Some of the cops are against us and we receive racist comments, threats even, but now that we are in a pandemic it shows what we are really trying to fight for. Our people know how to be peaceful, use our medicines, and our Indigenous knowledge. We've been put through so much in each community, and we still use our heart for the whole world. We try to think as a nation instead of as an individual. What kind of world do you want to leave behind for your child? For mine, I hope she grows up in a world full of love, kindness, growth, and that she is seen, heard, and understood."*[212]

*Indigenous Intern, Cheyenne Kechego, with daughter Rozeyah – she hopes her daughter will grow up in a more just world!*

In order to achieve SDG Justice, it is imperative that all levels of government, organizations, and Canadian citizens support the work Indigenous communities are already doing to protect the land, waters, and their own communities. These protections are deeply intertwined with many of the other SDGs and the need for justice is woven throughout each of them. When we talk about justice, there is a tendency to focus on the legal system and the official systems and structures that are in place to deliver justice. These are important, but it is also critical that we look to and learn from Indigenous ways of governing and delivering justice. For example, in the Salish territories, Nations use the Big House to correct a community member when they have done

something wrong. This model allows communities to pursue justice without resorting to the criminal justice system that is inherently colonial.

It is important to recognize and honour the intrinsic differences between all Indigenous people when looking at working within community, working in collaboration when applying the SDGs, and especially working within the realms of justice. When looking to Inuit communities and their Justice practices, the accused would be greeted by love and counsel from the elders in order to correct the behaviour. Everyone in the community had a role in sustaining the way of life and it was seen that if one were to be gone because of their actions then there is more work for everyone else to pick up. This model demonstrates how valued individuals within a community have a purpose and how the practice of unconditional love and counselling can correct behaviour, which is lost in the greater Criminal Justice System.

In order to successfully engage in acts of justice it is necessary to have a holistic and decolonial approach and support First Nations, Inuit, and Metis community-led practices of Justice. Across the world, Indigenous communities are calling for justice and modelling how to implement the SDGs. It is time to listen and support these existing efforts and work for a healthy, sustainable, and just world for all!

*Sharing Stories and Teachings on how to support and stand for justice for Indigenous Nations across the country*

*Indigenous youth occupy the steps of the BC Legislature in support of the Wet'suwet'en Heridatary Chiefs*

## Learn More!

One of the best ways to keep up to date with Indigenous and youth-led movements is through following their work on social media and participating in actions that they initiate. Here is a starter list of accounts to follow and websites to check out![213]

***Instagram***

https://www.instagram.com/indigenousclimateaction/
https://www.instagram.com/indigenousyouthforwetsuweten/
https://www.instagram.com/raised.voices.campaign/
https://www.instagram.com/calendow/

***Websites***

https://unistoten.camp/

# ENDNOTES

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211 VIDEA consulted with eight youth aged 20 to 30 years using a combination of focus group discussions and written responses to questions. Six out of eight respondents were women. Extract submitted by Hillary Ronald and Katelynne Herchak.

212 Youth respondent, who was interviewed by Hillary Ronald and Katelynne Herchak.

213 Further Reading: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf. See also Reclaiming Power and Place Calls for Justice – MMIWG Report: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/; Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

# CHAPTER 7: COVID-19: A RESET FOR CANADA IN THE UN DECADE OF ACTION

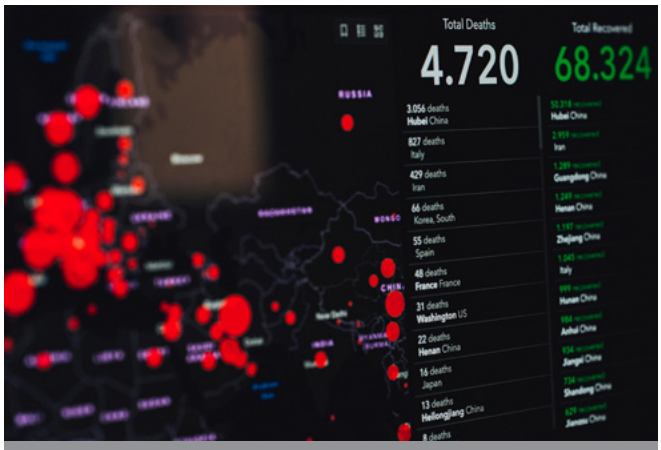
*Written by Dena Javadi and Sameera Hussain[1]*

# ABSTRACT

Focused on Canada's response to the disease known as COVID-19, this chapter highlights the key challenges arising from the pandemic, the policies implemented to address some of these challenges, and the need for systems thinking and intersectoral action to reset for the future. We provide context and connections using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to offer a more in-depth examination of the links between societal systems (health, housing, education, commerce, and trade) and Earth's natural systems (land and water). Broadly speaking, COVID-19 relates to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), but the challenges we have identified in this chapter make clear that addressing the issues that led to (and relate to) the outbreak of this disease requires policy coherence across systems to effect real change in what the UN refers to as the Decade of Action.


# INTRODUCTION

When responding to the novel 2019 coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), Canada had the advantage of learning from the experience of similar countries within the G20. The first case in Canada was confirmed on January 27, 2020, by the federal microbiology laboratory, three days before the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. With the emergence of new cases almost daily, it became evident that Canada would head in the direction of other countries and experience widespread community transmission.




*Source: Markus Spiske, https://unsplash.com/photos/3_SvgDspSTE*

The response to COVID-19 has shed a spotlight on much of the world's existing inequities and systemic failures. Like many countries, Canada's health and social systems have struggled to keep up with the shifting challenges presented by this crisis. The weakened resilience of our combined health, social, economic, and environmental systems reveals the urgency inherent in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets. The more integrated and equitable our systems, the less likely they are to collapse from shocks such as COVID-19.

Within a new global health security landscape defined by COVID-19 and climate change, the interlinkages across SDG targets, and their dedication to leaving no one behind (LNOB) are invaluable policy tools. Response measures and policy coherence across these measures should be in line with the sustainable development agenda in order to prevent a constant state of emergency in one or more sectors. While Canada has been a global leader in providing rapid economic support and implementing multisectoral policies to meet population needs, there is much more to do to ensure a comprehensive, long-term response. Further, localized adaptations of the policy response are necessary to ensure that the diverse needs across the population are met, and no one is left behind.

Austerity measures in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis have had negative impacts on health equity worldwide and in Canada.[2] Specifically, they have undermined social and environmental determinants of health, such as housing, food, and education.[3]

Compounding these effects by responding to this new crisis with similarly one-dimensional policy tools will have devastating consequences on population health and sustainable development.

In this chapter, we will examine several critical and interconnected areas captured within SDG targets and impacted by COVID-19: health, economy, food security, gender and intersectionality, education, housing, law enforcement, and environment. For each, we will explore challenges presented by the virus itself, by the policy response, and by public reactions. We will present the federal government's response. And finally, we will discuss integration, coordination, and policy coherence efforts needed in the way forward to ensure long-term resilience, equity, and population well-being. Challenges were identified based on a rapid review of news items, social media, and grey literature. Existing policies and measures were extracted from the Government of Canada's website. Finally, recommendations were made based on interlinkages across the sustainable development agenda.

# HEALTH

COVID-19 has revealed deficiencies in the capacity of some aspects of Canada's health system, such as long-term care and rural health, which adversely impacts SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Additionally, as discussed in this section, many other SDG targets are tied to health system failures.

## Challenges

Immediate health system challenges associated with COVID-19 outbreaks to date have been a lack of essential equipment such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ventilators, and other necessary supplies,[4] as well as understaffed and under-resourced long-term care facilities (nursing homes, other residential care homes).[5] In the medium term, challenges include: delays to 'non-essential' health services, which have implications for people with cancer and other chronic diseases;[6] diminished access to sexual and reproductive health services;[7] and little or no access to general and tertiary level health services for remote and rural areas, which affects Indigenous communities in particular.[8] In the longer term—and largely due to the unintended effects of the public health measures required in a pandemic situation (i.e., social distancing, isolation, and quarantine)—alcohol and drug use are increasing,[9] and population mental health is diminishing.[10] Prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) may also see a rise due to sedentary behaviour and unhealthy eating habits developed throughout the quarantine period.

*Source: Vincent Ghilione, https://unsplash.com/photos/cVaTkeN_xqI*

## Government response

The federal government response to health challenges has included public information campaigns, guidance to provinces and territories (PTs), working closely with health officials and experts on infection prevention and control, surveillance, minimizing community transmission, and strategies for protecting vulnerable populations and prioritizing the use of PPE. A Special Advisory Committee (SAC) supported by a Technical

Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to advise ministries of health in the PTs around coordination, public health policy, and technical content. Weekly federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Health Ministers' calls have been taking place to understand jurisdiction and accelerate collaboration for meeting shared needs. Laboratory testing from the national microbiology lab has become central to COVID-19, and its collaboration with PT public health laboratories ensures rapid diagnosis for multiple jurisdictions. In addition, $275 million of research funding was mobilized to develop, test, and implement measures to deal with the outbreak.[11]

A whole-of-government approach to contingency planning to minimize health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19 outbreaks has meant that critical services and supports were mobilized quickly across all levels of government. The Government Operations Centre increased its level of activity to coordinate federal actions that included the reallocation of resources across the government to ensure the delivery of essential actions, including $100 million in funding for the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).[12]

Other measures include organizing the return of Canadians living overseas, collaborating with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), engaging closely with G7 and G20 health and finance ministers, and working toward rapid regulatory responses for potential vaccines and medical countermeasures. Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) targeted at preparedness and response in the amount of $2 million was disbursed, and the government has committed an additional $159.5 million to WHO and other partners to support developing countries.[13]

## Way forward

At the time of writing, Canada's first surge of people with COVID-19 coming into contact with health systems is underway. Emerging evidence suggests that as a result of wide-scale physical distancing, the speed of spread has closed, and the curve is "flattening."[14] This provides reason for cautious optimism that if strong public health measures are introduced, they will enable societies to function. The risk of new outbreaks will be minimised through strong defenses (case finding and contact tracing), and any new outbreaks will be quickly contained. In this way, we will be able to live with COVID-19 until the threat it poses is reduced through the availability of an effective therapy and/or a widely administered, effective, and safe vaccine.

Cross-partisan government measures have been critical for triggering individuals, communities, and leaders to learn and take rapid action.[15] Yet the trajectory since January has revealed flaws in our health and social systems. These flaws are most apparent in Canada's long-term care (LTC) facilities, which have experienced the brunt of collective trauma. Early on, older persons were identified as a population group especially vulnerable to COVID-19. And despite national efforts to Leave No One Behind, older people are disproportionately represented in COVID-related cases in Canada. This is an area where varied public health responses between provinces are evident, and enhanced coordination may have prevented adverse outcomes. British Columbia was quick to identify older persons as an at-risk population group, prioritizing measures in LTC facilities such as strict staffing rules to prevent transmission (LTC workers were ordered to work at one facility only for the duration of the pandemic).[16] Ontario, in contrast, reported 30 COVID-19 related deaths in a single LTC facility, and requested the federal government for military assistance in its care homes.[17] LTC workers were left feeling disenfranchised and unable to do their work.

Health workers responsible for patients experiencing other forms of ill health have also faced challenges in fulfilling their roles. With the pause on services defined as non-essential, patients living with cancer, pain, and other chronic diseases are left wondering how long they will have to wait for curative or pain-relieving surgeries. A consolidation of provincial plans to meet patients' needs during and after the pandemic is necessary to alleviate unnecessary stress on both patients and health workers.

Other existing gaps in the system have left specific populations vulnerable simply because access to health services is limited in remote and rural areas. In many parts of Canada, there is no disaggregated or race-based data available that might provide information about compromised population groups. In New York, for example, Latinx and Black people are dying at

disproportionately high rates.[18] Having this information can support a more tailored local response and public health messaging designed to leave no one behind.

Educating and informing the public has proven to be critical. Government efforts to employ multiple messaging techniques using various forms of media—including print, online pop-ups, social media, radio, and television—have successfully initiated behaviour change. Using sign language and captioning on televised media briefings, the use of both official languages in the Prime Minister's daily briefings, and creating awareness resources in 10 Indigenous languages were all policies based on principles of inclusion. However, racism and hate crimes linked to COVID-19, aimed in particular at Chinese Canadians, have been on the rise and also require a response, as discussed later in the chapter.

Politics and health are closely tied, both in Canada's domestic and international response to COVID-19. The need for communication, coordination, and coherence is clear: All actors in the governance landscape must be aligned to react and respond decisively and appropriately. Canada has been lauded for its values-based leadership in global health,[19] and diplomatic relations have been especially important during this pandemic. Assisting China in its response demonstrates Canada's international solidarity and commitment to take aggressive action to contain COVID-19. As a Member State of WHO, Canada's financial contributions—particularly in the form of assessed contributions based on country income groups—are crucial to allow WHO to operate in its primary role.[20] Canada must lead global partners in protecting health security and continue to trust and support WHO to carry out its mandate with speed and efficiency in a public health emergency. This values-based, multilateralist, and global mindset cuts across sustainable development targets under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

TARGET 3·3
FIGHT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
TARGET 3·8
ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE
TARGET 3·B
SUPPORT RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE VACCINES AND MEDICINES
TARGET 3·D
IMPROVE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RISKS
TARGET 16·6
DEVELOP EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT INSTITUTIONS
TARGET 16·7
ENSURE RESPONSIVE, INCLUSIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE DECISION-MAKING
TARGET 16·10
ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
TARGET 17·2
ODA
IMPLEMENT ALL DEVELOPEMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITMENTS

# ECONOMY

COVID-19 is an economic crisis as well as a health one. SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) have ripple effects across all SDG targets. Avoiding negative long-term economic impacts of the response to COVID-19 will require creative solutions that cut across sectors to rebuild economic resilience while protecting human and environmental health.

## Challenges

Many countries have implemented physical distancing and movement restrictions to reduce opportunities for transmission and curb the spread of the virus. The shutdown of businesses and industries and the volatility of markets have resulted in certain individuals experiencing loss of income and savings, while others consolidate large gains.[21] People working in the informal sectors and existing on daily wages have been particularly adversely affected. Many small businesses that have had to temporarily cease operations may

never recover.[22] The shutdown of factories and larger industries has left people unemployed and furloughed. In the medium term, the number of people needing assistance and falling below the poverty line will increase. Older adults experiencing job loss and losing or lacking retirement savings may never be able to secure another source of income. Employment culture is adapting quickly to streamlining costs and digitizing workplaces, further exacerbating future unemployment rates. The duration of the economic crisis we face is unclear, but its impact will be felt across individuals, businesses, and sectors.

## Government response

The risk of the domestic and international economic downturns, which have impacted supply chains, commodity prices, and global financial markets, were identified and acted upon early. G7 and G20 ministerial meetings continue to be held regularly to develop and implement policy tools to safeguard against risks to the global economic system.

Within Canada, pragmatic responses to ensure economic and social protection are evident. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) payment for people facing the loss of income, an increase in child benefit payments for families, and deferrals on mortgage payments are all targeted at individuals and families.[23] A fund of $5 million has been allocated for people ordered to isolate, and $9 billion in new funding has been mobilized to support post-secondary students.[24]

Significant support is being provided by the federal government to businesses to avoid layoffs, create new jobs, enhance access to credit, and create opportunities for youth. The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, for example, offers employers a subsidy of 75% of employee wages for up to 12 weeks.[25] The Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program lowers rent for small businesses by 75%, which will help save many businesses from shutting down operations forever.[26] Airlines have similarly benefitted from waived ground lease rents paid to the federal government. Operators in national parks, historic sites, and marine conservation areas are permitted to defer payments on commercial leases and licenses of occupation without accruing interest.[27]

Different communities face unique economic challenges. The response must likewise be tailored. Rural businesses and communities will receive $287 million for access to capital through the Community Futures Network.[28] The Industrial Research Assistance Program will invest $250 million to assist innovative, early stage companies, while $20 million of funding to Futurepreneur Canada will support young innovators. Small- and medium-sized Indigenous businesses and Aboriginal Financial Institutions will receive up to $306.8 million.[29]

*Source: Charles Deluvio, https://unsplash.com/photos/vQdFU6DVgxM*

## Way Forward

As more economic stimulus measures are added daily, it is necessary to reflect upon the policy coherence for sustainable development across these measures. Under principles of sustainability, economic prosperity cannot come at the expense of the environment or marginalized populations. While the government has tried to balance support to high-polluting industries by also supporting cleanup efforts and workers, it remains a challenge to ensure compliance and avoid crediting polluting practices. Government aid packages to support the

cleanup of orphan wells are coming at a time when the Polluter Pays Principle had been upheld, requiring Alberta energy companies to pay for the cleanup of oil wells on agricultural land before paying creditors or investors.[30] Therefore the aid for cleanup is essentially a subsidy for the oil industry and a slippery slope in long-term enforcement of the Polluter Pays Principle.[31] Overlooking environmental stewardship and the strides made to divest from a fossil fuel economy may be an irreversible mistake at a critical time for action against climate change, as discussed later in this chapter.

Government response packages have also provided support to small businesses, innovators, students, and those protecting our historic and natural sites. To prevent a protracted economic recession, policymakers should continue to adapt benefits packages based on assets and needs, tailor responses to diverse sub-populations based on LNOB principles, and coordinate with different levels of government and civil society. A networked approach among those providing financial, logistical, cultural, legal, and social support is necessary to work with businesses and individuals to strengthen collective resilience and avoid redundancies. The forthcoming sections in this chapter will explore the importance of utilizing systems thinking to avoid one-dimensional approaches to economic growth. By exploring other sectors affected by this health and economic crisis, we demonstrate the interconnectedness of economic prosperity, health, and sustainable development.

TARGET 1·3
IMPLEMENT SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS
TARGET 8·1
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH
TARGET 8·2
DIVERSIFY, INNOVATE AND UPGRADE FOR ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY
TARGET 8·3
PROMOTE POLICIES TO SUPPORT JOB CREATION AND GROWING ENTERPRISES
TARGET 8·4
IMPROVE RESOURCE EFFICIENCY IN CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
TARGET 8·6
PROMOTE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
TARGET 11·4
PROTECT THE WORLD'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE
TARGET 16·8
STRENGTHEN THE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

# FOOD SECURITY

As a threat to supply chains, livelihoods, and markets, COVID-19's impact on food security poses several challenges for targets under SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Addressing SDG targets under multiple other goals is essential to overcome the economic and environmentally driven food insecurities exacerbated by COVID-19.

## Challenges

Acute food security challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic include poor accessibility to food outlets in remote areas, closures of food banks and food drop-off points, and heightened health risk to frontline workers in grocery stores. In the medium term, the food supply chain has been disrupted by the closure of large meat and poultry-producing plants, farm labour shortages due to the loss of foreign workers, and changes in demand.[32] Long-term challenges include loss of livelihood for small-scale and subsistence farmers, continued disruptions to the food supply chain, uncertainties in international trade, food wastage in export products, food shortages in remote areas, food price inflation, and lowered purchasing power due to economic recession.[33] Those most at risk of food insecurity in this landscape include Canadians living in remote areas, the urban poor, and those with limited mobility.

Global food shortages and restrictions in export products will also threaten an interlinked food system that is already facing challenges due to climate change.[34] Food crises in fragile contexts can lead to both acute and protracted emergencies, including famine and violent conflict.[35] Further, food insecurity directly weakens health systems due to malnutrition and increased need for health services. It also undermines economic resilience by adversely affecting the workforce and destroying livelihoods.

## Government Response

Canada's response to the threat of food insecurity has included support for individuals, support for food businesses and charities, and support for the agriculture, agri-food, and fisheries sectors. The federal government has provided $350 million to charities and nonprofit organizations, including food banks and volunteer-based home delivery groups that deliver essential services to those in need.[36] An additional $9 million was provided to United Way in part to support grocery delivery services for older adults.[37] Admirable efforts to connect organizations and support collective advocacy and action for food security are available through Food Secure Canada and local organizations.[38] Part of a $305 million distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund is targeted to address food insecurity in Indigenous communities, and an additional stimulus of $25 million has been allocated for the provision of nutritious food and personal hygiene products through Nutrition North Canada.[39]

To support the agri-food and fisheries sector, the government granted an exemption to travel restrictions for temporary foreign workers. In addition, $50 million was allocated to farmers, fish harvesters, and food production and processing employers to ensure compliance with 14-day isolation period requirements for workers from abroad.[40] For farmers and processors experiencing loss of livelihood, Farm Credit Canada provided $5 billion in lending to producers, agribusinesses, and food processors. Similarly, the federal government provided $62.5 million, through the Canadian Seafood Stabilization Fund, for the fish and seafood processing sector.[41] These funds respond to the need for added storage capacity, interim financing, compliance with revised health and safety measures, improved manufacturing technologies to enhance quality, and adaptations needed to respond to changing quality control measures and market demand.

Globally, Canada continues to play a leadership role in upholding food security. On April 17, 2020, Canada participated in the *High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of Food Security and Nutrition*, where the participating Member States discussed the nexus between sustainable development and humanitarian assistance and agreed that support must be provided to countries managing vulnerabilities in their food supply.[42] They asserted that all food system actors should work together "to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of our food systems to help galvanize the post-emergency recovery through a set of initiatives focused on innovation, financing, technology, partnerships and new levels of regional and global collaboration and information sharing."[43]

*Source: John Cameron https://unsplash.com/photos/IEeqknvHRKQ*

## Way Forward

Although response measures have been critical to provide vulnerable Canadians with access to food and avoid an even bigger shock to the agricultural and fishing sectors, more is needed to mitigate the upcoming food security challenges. With high rates of unemployment, struggling businesses, and impending inflation, more people will experience food insecurity due to a diminished ability to pay. Charities and non-governmental organizations typically working in this space will be limited in their capacity to meet the increased need. Producers and processors may have a lowered capacity to donate and support these nonprofit groups. Engaging the agriculture, agri-food, and fisheries sector to support non-governmental organizations and community-based food security measures is necessary.

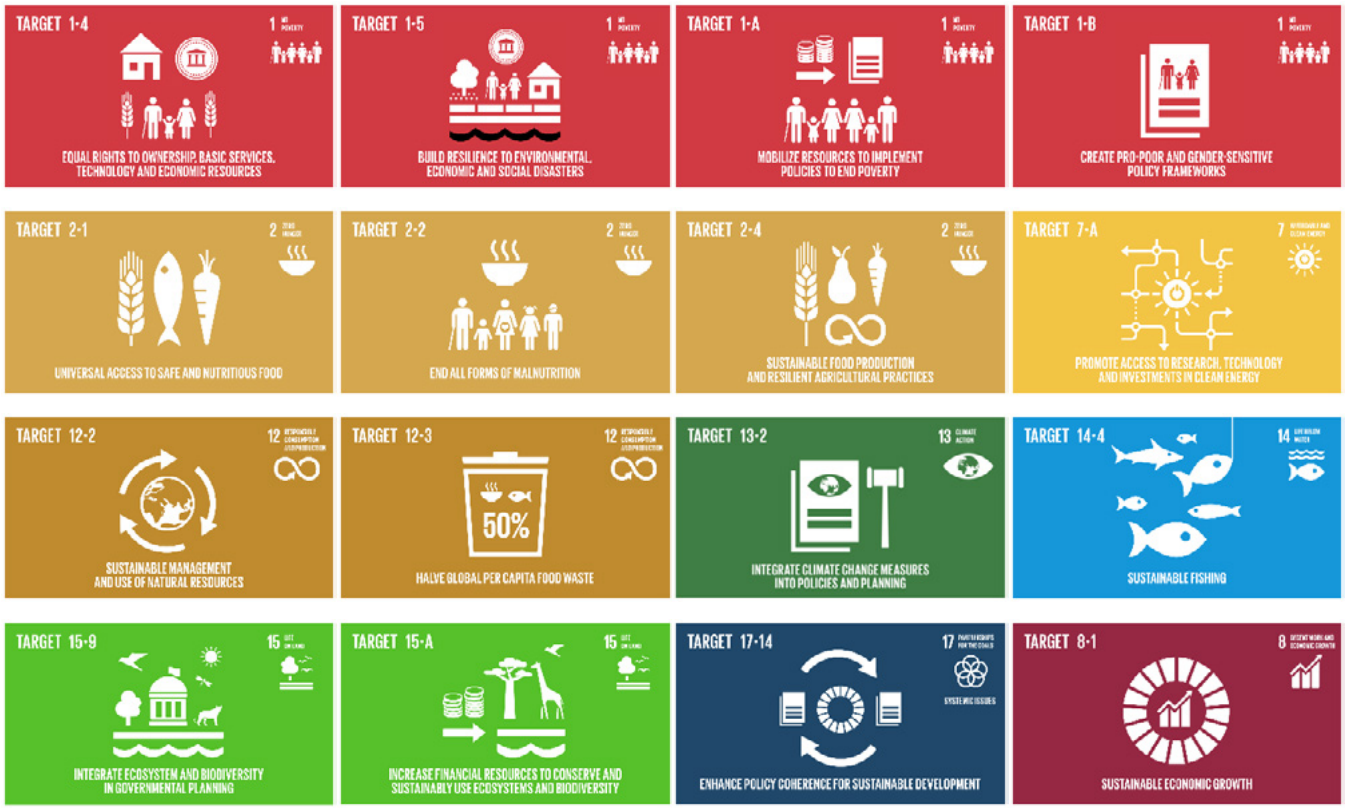
Further, increased investment in sustainable agriculture and aquaculture to test and scale-up more efficient, safe, and environmentally sustainable production methods is necessary to battle inflation and ensure affordable access to quality foods.[44] More sustainable

practices can include land use measures, irrigation techniques, crop diversity, alternative energy sources, and mechanisms to increase efficiencies in the processing, packaging, and transport phases.[45] In addition, optimizing food supply chains to drive down costs, especially for remote locations, is essential. Improved infrastructure and better use of existing institutions and partnerships across sectors are critical factors to achieve this optimization. Amendments to the Business Risk Management programs under the Canadian Agricultural Policy framework may be necessary to support farmers and agri-businesses to manage risk within the changing context of COVID-19.[46]

On the global scale, the pressure caused by COVID-19 on global food supply chains, compounded by the effects of climate change, must be diplomatically managed to mitigate the potential for worsening situations in fragile contexts. If global cooperation is neglected, states will find themselves grappling with not only the long-term domestic challenges posed by COVID-19 but also a heightened refugee crisis caused by food insecurity. Canada must continue to set an example by keeping food export channels open and contributing to humanitarian assistance through the World Food Programme.[47]

These combined efforts would not only help ensure food security during a recession for all who live in Canada (SDG 2), but also address other global SDG targets including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

*Source: @evitt https://unsplash.com/photos/fQ9X2rPEwq8*


TARGET 1·4
EQUAL RIGHTS TO OWNERSHIP, BASIC SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES
TARGET 1·5
BUILD RESILIENCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISASTERS
TARGET 1·A
MOBILIZE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES TO END POVERTY
TARGET 1·B
CREATE PRO-POOR AND GENDER-SENSITIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS
TARGET 2·1
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD
TARGET 2·2
END ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION
TARGET 2·4
SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES
TARGET 7·A
PROMOTE ACCESS TO RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND INVESTMENTS IN CLEAN ENERGY
TARGET 12·2
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
TARGET 12·3
50%
HALVE GLOBAL PER CAPITA FOOD WASTE
TARGET 13·2
INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURES INTO POLICIES AND PLANNING
TARGET 14·4
SUSTAINABLE FISHING
TARGET 15·9
INTEGRATE ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY IN GOVERNMENTAL PLANNING
TARGET 15·A
INCREASE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY
TARGET 17·14
ENHANCE POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
TARGET 8·1
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

# GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Women's empowerment and balanced leadership have experienced a step back globally during the response to COVID-19, affecting progress toward SDG 5 (Gender Equality).[48] However, in Canada, 7 of the 14 chief medical officers leading the response are women, and they have inspired women and girls around the world.[49] Despite this, challenges remain in addressing gender and intersectionality across sectors. This section is focused on women; however, we recognize that persons with non-binary gender identities are also facing unique challenges in the context of COVID-19. The LGBTQIA2S+[50] community faces greater financial difficulties, mental health issues, and feelings of vulnerability than non-LGBTQIA2S+ individuals.[51]

## Challenges

The health, social, economic, and political consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have not only revealed existing inequities but also exacerbated their impact. Race, age, and economic status are factors associated with both the clinical and epidemiological presentation of the virus. The impact of other intersecting elements such as gender, disability, and digital literacy is evident in the inequities experienced throughout the response. For example, women, especially women of colour, make up a larger proportion of frontline workers due to the higher percentage of women in caregiving professions.[52]

With quarantine measures in place, the incidence of gender-based violence has gone up worldwide as well as in Canada.[53] Job losses, confinement, economic stress, disruptions to routines, fear, and poor mental health can lead to increased violence and heighten the vulnerability of women in precarious domestic situations. Further, at-risk women who seek support from social services and women's shelters are experiencing added barriers to accessing these venues and are even more isolated and vulnerable.[54] Women in the sex trade industry and other informal sectors have also experienced a loss of income and heightened risk.[55]

Loss of livelihood and teleworking measures have disproportionately impacted women's professional lives and economic security—something that will typically take longer for women to re-attain.[56] Women often carry a heavier burden of caregiving and housework, leaving them less able to devote time to their work when staying at home.[57] Further, the diminished access to services leaves them without the community support necessary to balance domestic and professional duties. Not all women experience these challenges to the same extent or in the same way. An intersectional approach is necessary to deliver a targeted response for those experiencing challenges due to their gender, race, culture, economic status, age, or ability.

## Government Response

In response to the higher incidence of gender-based violence, the government of Canada is providing up to $50 million to support women and children through women's shelters and sexual assault centres.[58]

The Canadian Women's Foundation is supporting the government in these efforts to deliver emergency funding and to apply a gender lens to policies planned and implemented in response to the pandemic.[59]

Other advocacy groups and ministries are also establishing advisory groups and policy approaches to protect the rights of groups that may traditionally be excluded. For example, on April 10, 2020, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion announced the establishment of a COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group, which will inform the government of the lived-experiences of persons with disabilities through this crisis and provide advice on how to ensure equality of access to health care, information and communications, mental health and social isolation, and employment and income supports.[60] This will ensure that an inclusive, disability lens is included in decision-making in response to the pandemic. An intersectional lens to COVID-19 policies can be applied by using a combination of the tools made available by specific advocacy groups and responsible ministries.

## Way Forward

To ensure that advances made in gender equity and rights are maintained as communities throughout Canada emerge into a COVID-ready state, policies for health and economic resilience and social support need a robust gender and intersectionality lens. In the short term, general response efforts should also consider their ability to address challenges faced by women and other vulnerable groups. For example, partnerships across sectors could be mobilized to implement creative access points for at-risk women to receive supportive services and protection from violence and abuse. Further, systems put in place to protect vulnerable groups should be gender-sensitive. For example, the services offered to those experiencing homelessness should consider privacy and access to female sanitary products.

While supporting businesses, the government can require gender-balanced hiring practices and benefits. The heavier caregiving and housework burden on women reveals the need for changes in employers' incentive structures, flexible working arrangements, and access to caregiving services. The aftermath of the pandemic is an opportunity to revisit gendered employment practices and to provide more affordable access to community support services. Several of the hardest hit communities in Canada are lower-income neighbourhoods with overcrowding, single-parent households holding multiple low-wage jobs, and homes of essential services staff.[61] The pandemic has made it clear that these communities are under-supported and left behind in terms of infrastructure development, social protection, economic policy, and health security. Rebuild and reset efforts need to engage these communities and take a multi-stakeholder and intersectional approach to community development.

A comprehensive long-term approach to addressing the gender and intersectionality challenges revealed by the pandemic would not only address SDG 5 (Gender Equality) but also targets under other goals, such as SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

TARGET 1·3
IMPLEMENT SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS
TARGET 5·2
END ALL VIOLENCE AGAINST AND EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS
TARGET 5·4
VALUE UNPAID CARE AND PROMOTE SHARED DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES
TARGET 5·5
ENSURE FULL PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING
TARGET 10·3
ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND END DISCRIMINATION
TARGET 10·4
ADOPT FISCAL AND SOCIAL POLICIES THAT PROMOTE EQUALITY
TARGET 11·1
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

# EDUCATION

School closures as a result of COVID-19 directly affect large portions of the population's access to quality education (SDG 4), but they have also had direct and indirect negative impacts on other aspects of sustainable development, disproportionately felt by already vulnerable groups.

## Challenges

The closure of public schools initially left children in a lurch, with school boards and ministries of education scrambling to digitize their operations rapidly. Short-term challenges include ensuring that children have the tools to learn: laptops or tablets, Internet access, and a safe and healthy learning environment. In the medium

term, the removal of an integral institution in daily life has had severe implications. The children of frontline and essential workers may lack appropriate care at home. Parents who are left unemployed or working from home are having to support their children's remote learning, adding new responsibilities for which they lack qualifications. Teachers are adapting to the digital classroom and are inadequately supported for this new way of working.

The disruption of routine affects children, their parents, and their teachers, resulting in insecurity and trauma, especially for children. This insecurity can exacerbate pre-existing difficulties in family dynamics. Children with special needs are left without the programming and resources targeted to support their needs, which could have long-term adverse effects. For secondary and post-secondary students, the pandemic has had a direct impact on final examinations and part-time jobs to support their studies, creating a source of anxiety. Children whose only safe place was school are now left in a state of fear and anxiety with potential for both acute and lifelong impact. Those from under-resourced families who rely on schools to provide food and materials face an additional challenge of finding social support elsewhere. Further, children in social care services (and their parents) are facing limited or suspended visitation opportunities, court delays, and stalled processes of reconciliation. Suspended in-person visits between workers and families can heighten the risk of child maltreatment. Children and youth in care who are aging out of the system are also in jeopardy of losing their funding and may face a heightened risk of unemployment and homelessness during and after the economic downturn.

## Government response

The Canada Student Emergency Benefit constitutes a $9 billion package of measures aimed at young people. Post-secondary students currently enrolled in school or planning to start in September are eligible for a monthly stipend from May until August 2020.[62] An additional $75.2 million is offered as distinctions-based support to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis post-secondary students.[63] Funds are also allocated for scholarship extensions, fellowships, and grants to continue research projects and placements.

The responses for elementary, middle, and secondary schools, both public and private, are governed by provinces and territories.[64] Schools across the country have shifted quickly to online learning, and most do not have plans to resume in-person classes before September 2020. School boards across Canada conducted needs assessments and issued computers and other learning support tools to students in need before commencing online learning.[65]

School districts with under-resourced students have mobilized to provide them with food and materials, establishing physical distancing measures when performing family outreach. Meanwhile, counselors and teachers are coordinating efforts to meet the mental health needs of students and to provide additional support for parents in difficult circumstances. For children and youth in care, the relevant ministries in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia have announced that anyone going to age out of care during the pandemic, or immediately prior, will still be eligible for funding from the government.[66]

*Source : Allie https://unsplash.com/photos/xnQRnpcoCb8*

## Way forward

Schools are essential in the fabric of communities. Teachers, school administrators, and counselors need more support overall to effectively play their roles as not only educators but also mediators, mentors, and role models for showing care.

In the face of economic recession, cuts to schools and social programs are often deployed and never recovered in the long term.[67] In the aftermath of this pandemic, such cuts would be irresponsible, given the demonstrated significance of the role schools play. Instead, more investment should be made in the design of curricula that support the development of resilient populations with competencies in systems thinking,[68] care-based approaches,[69] and emotional intelligence. Additionally, where missing, the arts should be reintegrated into school programming. Art and music have inspired social cohesion and community resilience in battling this pandemic. Our students should be exposed to tools for self-expression and community-building at an early age.

Furthermore, as responsible citizens, students should be empowered to take part in the rebuilding and resetting efforts in the post-pandemic phase. Student-led climate marches worldwide demonstrated their desire to effect change. With teachers guiding them to explore sector-wide effects, students can identify cross-cutting opportunities to learn and to give back to their communities.

TARGET 4.1
FREE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
TARGET 4.5
ELIMINATE ALL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION
TARGET 4.7
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
TARGET 4.A
BUILD AND UPGRADE INCLUSIVE AND SAFE SCHOOLS
TARGET 8.6
PROMOTE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
TARGET 11.4
PROTECT THE WORLD'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE
TARGET 13.3
BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY TO MEET CLIMATE CHANGE
TARGET 16.2
PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE

# HOUSING

Housing is arguably one of Canada's most complex and pressing issues and a challenge for inclusive and sustainable urbanization (SDG 11). COVID-19 has highlighted different aspects of the ways housing insecurity weakens Canada's response to a systemic shock.

## Challenges

Northern communities have been experiencing a housing crisis for decades.[70] Overcrowding, indoor air pollution, and poor access to water and sanitation also make it difficult for these communities to follow public health measures during the pandemic. Physical distancing in tight quarters and handwashing without access to water, soap, or hand-sanitizer are impossible.[71] Further, years of living in poorly ventilated structures while being exposed to environmental tobacco smoke and wood-stove fumes, have left the population with a higher prevalence of respiratory infections, which are a risk factor for COVID-19.[72]

Meanwhile, nationwide, housing prices have continued to climb over the last two decades, pushing people away from city centres and pricing out long-term residents of newly gentrified neighbourhoods.[73] Nonprofits and emergency shelters working in Canadian urban slums, such as Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, were already struggling to meet the needs of their target populations.

With COVID-19, the number of beds available was further reduced due to physical distancing measures. Public health messaging to communities battling with housing insecurity is an additional challenge as individuals are not empowered to act on these measures, nor are they easily reached.

Underlying causes of homelessness—such as addiction, abuse, violence, economic insecurity, disability, and elderly neglect—are exacerbated by the pandemic. Social services designed to address these barriers are less available and accessible during the pandemic, which may impede or reverse progress made by individuals in precarious circumstances. The economic recession and increasing unemployment rate will delay or inhibit the ability of those living with housing insecurity to improve their economic status. Further, individuals who may not have been experiencing housing insecurity before COVID-19 could now be at risk due to the loss of livelihood. The combination of these factors could increase the strain on policies and programs in place to support vulnerable groups.

*Source: Eviatar Bach https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Occupy_Vancouver_tents_3.jpg*

## Government Response

Some Canadian cities have opted to use empty hotels as temporary housing for those without stable housing during the pandemic. Provincial governments have placed a hold on evictions for non-payment of rent.[74] Big Canadian banks and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation have worked together to defer mortgage payments on a case-by-case basis.[75]

At the federal level, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) supports individuals who have experienced loss of income with $2000 a month for up to 16 months, which allows people to continue paying rent or mortgages to an extent.[76] For those already experiencing housing insecurity, the government provided $157.5 million to the Reaching Home initiative to purchase beds, physical distancing barriers, and accommodation to reduce overcrowded shelters.[77] The government also loosened restrictions on eligibility, community contributions, and geographic limitations, which allows Reaching Home to coordinate its response with other partners and to respond to the needs of a transient population. The Indigenous Homelessness stream of Reaching Home continues to target the needs of off-reserve indigenous populations.[78]

Northern communities are supported in part by the $305 million distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to improve community resilience in the face of COVID-19. An additional $100 million is also provided to support public health needs and preparedness measures in First Nation and Inuit communities.[79] Housing-related and overcrowding-related expenses covered under this fund can include the provision of private accommodations and adaptation of community space for physical distancing. Another $130 million is explicitly allocated to Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories to support their response efforts and businesses, including airlines.[80]

Leaders in Northern communities have been highly effective in managing community and regional response efforts and have rolled out containment strategies in different modalities. For example, media campaigns have successfully promoted physical distancing through meaningful and relevant ways given the context and housing structures available.

## Way Forward

As the likelihood of continued economic hardship increases, housing security advocates are calling for certain short-term response efforts, such as the use of hotels, to be used as permanent solutions to the housing crisis.[81] However, previous attempts at similar solutions have resulted in unsafe and dilapidated housing options in the long term due to neglect of maintenance and security.[82] A permanent solution would require meaningful financial support to maintain these buildings, to offer the necessary support services to their residents, and to establish pathways to recovery, resilience, and access to sustainable livelihood.

Coordination across social support programs is necessary to increase the impact of government funds allocated to supporting vulnerable populations. For example, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented among those experiencing housing insecurity.[83] Therefore, housing-related initiatives such as Reaching Home should coordinate efforts with Indigenous programs and services with support from government channels.

Bailouts and stimulus packages given to the private sector could also allow the government to require businesses to support communities. Requirements could include flexible hiring arrangements (to create jobs for the housing insecure and those living with addiction) or long-term investment in affordable housing projects. Furthermore, businesses may capitalize on the crisis to avoid rehiring staff, particularly staff belonging to marginalized groups. Policies and laws to avoid further employment discrimination and poor rehiring practices are necessary to avoid an exacerbated poverty cycle.

Canada's housing crisis is not representative of the country's development status, and practical policy response is overdue. Government support given during the pandemic has been critical in mitigating some of the challenges; however, further collaboration between provincial governments, the private sector, Indigenous groups, and the housing industry is needed. To manage this collaboration effectively, strengthened legal instruments that protect Canadian citizens, residents, and refugees are critical. Addressing the housing crisis in Canada would also address key targets within the sustainable development goals, including targets under SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

TARGET 1-2
REDUCE POVERTY BY AT LEAST 50%
TARGET 1-3
IMPLEMENT SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS
TARGET 1-4
EQUAL RIGHTS TO OWNERSHIP, BASIC SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES
TARGET 8-3
PROMOTE POLICIES TO SUPPORT JOB CREATION AND GROWING ENTERPRISES
TARGET 6-2
END OPEN DEFECATION AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO SANITATION AND HYGIENE
TARGET 8-5
FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK WITH EQUAL PAY
TARGET 8-6
PROMOTE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
TARGET 10-1
REDUCE INCOME INEQUALITIES
TARGET 10-2
PROMOTE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INCLUSION
TARGET 10-3
ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND END DISCRIMINATION
TARGET 10-4
ADOPT FISCAL AND SOCIAL POLICIES THAT PROMOTE EQUALITY
TARGET 11-1
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING
TARGET 11-3
INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION
TARGET 16-B
PROMOTE AND ENFORCE NON-DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND POLICIES
TARGET 17-17
ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

# LAW ENFORCEMENT

The criminalization of infectious diseases runs the risk of becoming normalized during acute health security threats such as COVID-19. To uphold standards of peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), legal tools must be carefully executed to prevent discrimination.

## Challenges

Challenges pertaining to law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed from two perspectives. One is the criminalization of infectious diseases—something that became a human rights issue during the HIV epidemic.[84] The other is the rise in criminal activity. During the pandemic, some cities have experienced an increase in break-ins, armed robberies, domestic violence, and racially motivated assault.[85] Poor mental health, anger and discrimination towards racial minorities, and more opportunities to target businesses and individuals are some of the reasons for this rise in crime.

An additional challenge Canada uniquely faced is the mass shooting in Nova Scotia in April 2020. This was the largest mass shooting in Canada's history and devastated an already grieving nation, potentially compounding the mental health effects of the pandemic. Poor mental health resulting from COVID-19 may lead to more instances of small or large-scale violence, and prevention efforts are required during the response to the pandemic.

## Government Response

Throughout Canada, certain cities have imposed law enforcement measures to ensure compliance with quarantine and physical distancing rules. These include fines and policing. From the lessons learned with HIV and AIDS, policing measures are often ineffective and also disproportionately target minority and at-risk groups due to profiling and lack of awareness.[86] Therefore, the slippery slope of policing a pandemic can be a threat to human rights. The Siracusa Principles acknowledge the possibility of restricting certain human rights during public health emergencies.[87] Under international law, limits on human rights can only be justified under specific criteria, including that they are based on evidence, rationally connected to a legitimate aim, necessary, limited in duration, and subject to review.[88]

Police departments have also been mobilized to find and stop those who are taking advantage of the pandemic circumstances to make money, such as resellers and promoters of fake COVID-19 tests and treatments.[89] They are also acting on hate crimes and arresting responsible individuals.

The federal government's central action to deter crime has been in response to the mass shooting in Nova Scotia. Assault-style weapons, including about 1500 models, have been banned.[90] Existing owners will have two years to keep weapons but cannot use them.

Other indirect response efforts have included protective and preventative mental health measures, such as the establishment of the Canada COVID-19 app to connect Canadians to peer support workers, social workers, psychologists, and other professionals for confidential chat sessions or phone calls.[91] Wellness Together Canada brings together a consortium of organizations to support mental health during this difficult time. These include Stepped Care Solutions, Kids Help Phone, Homewood Health, and Greenspace Health, among others.[92]

## Way Forward

In the case of COVID-19 and public health emergencies more generally, the evidence does not suggest that fines and policing deter people from ignoring public health measures.[93] Racial profiling and penalizing those of lower socioeconomic status—who may not be able to self-quarantine comfortably or who do not

have the same access to public health information—are more likely outcomes of pandemic policing measures. However, other public health emergency policing measures are essential, such as shutting down black markets related to COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccination. Law enforcement coordination with online retailers is one means of identifying and preventing these sellers from having access to the public.

The federal government has not yet directly responded to the rising crime and racially motivated assaults brought on by COVID-19 and the surrounding racist rhetoric. Coalitions of anti-racism groups are coordinating efforts and calling for measures to address this challenge.[94] These measures must address not only the problem but also its underlying causes. Causes include the messaging and misinformation around COVID-19 globally and the economic pressure and poor mental health facing individuals. Barriers to accessing mental health services include affordability, stigma, and, currently, availability due to physical distancing measures. Wellness Together Canada addresses some of these barriers.[95] Still, more outreach and awareness are needed to ensure that all Canadians know that resources are available for their use and understand the value of protecting mental health. A coordinated communication effort by outreach services and nonprofits, such as shelters, food banks, addiction programs, and others, is required to reach at-risk populations and promote the use of the tools made available by Wellness Together Canada. In addition, targeted support to racial minorities experiencing increased fear and anxiety would prevent further deterioration of social cohesion in Canadian communities.

A tactful response to rising tensions across the nation is essential to ensure that sustainable development measures move forward. This would support not only targets within SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) but also SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

# ENVIRONMENT

In the shadow of the pandemic, the climate crisis continues to pose a threat to health security. However, as a result of the urgency and visible trauma surrounding COVID-19, efforts to mitigate climate challenges (SDG 13) and slow down environmental degradation (SDG 14 and 15) have been put on hold.

## Challenges

While grounded flights and fewer car trips have lowered transportation emissions and temporarily reduced air pollution, other anthropogenic sources of environmental degradation have increased. For example, online retail and its resultant emissions have seen a significant rise,[96] and the use of plastics has gone up as a result of health and hygiene measures. Increased use of personal protective equipment, gloves, masks, wipes, etc. are contributing to a growing carbon footprint. Grocery stores are also unable to allow reusable bags, relying instead on plastic bags. These measures are necessary but have reversed progress established through Canada's ban on single-use plastics.

Other global environmental challenges include loosened environmental and conservation restrictions on businesses in the name of stimulating the economy.[97] Bailouts to big polluters, including airlines and Canada's oil sector, also run the risk of setting the clock back on progress towards diversifying natural resources and divesting from the fossil fuel economy towards sustainable energy.

## Government response

The federal government has promised $1.72 billion to clean up orphan and inactive oil and gas wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.[98] This also supports 5,200 jobs in Alberta. An additional $750 million fund was also created for a new Emissions Reduction Fund to support workers and reduce emissions in Canada's oil and gas sector, focusing on methane. Of this, $75 million is dedicated to the offshore sector to support investment in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.[99]

## Way Forward

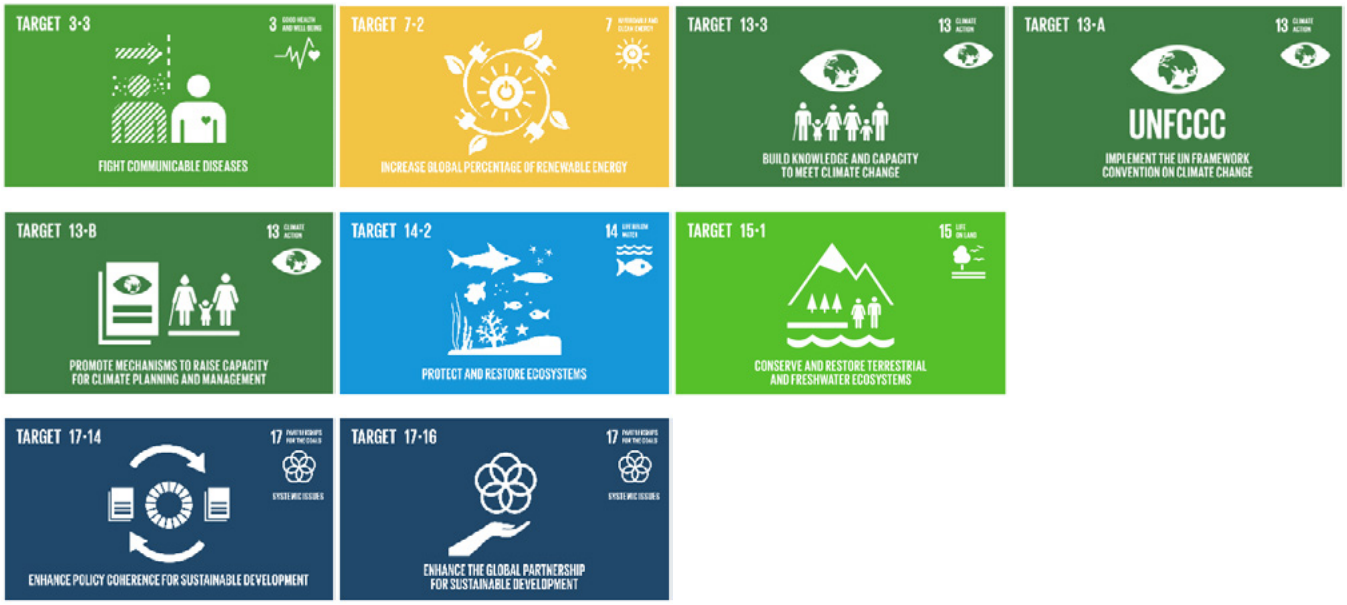
Response measures thus far have focused on protecting health in the short-term, supporting vulnerable groups, mitigating the impact of an immediate economic recession, and allowing Canadians to maintain a certain standard of living with the promise to return to 'normal.' While these measures have been essential and appreciated, they also need further reflection, refinement, and revised cohesion to ensure that they do not unintentionally contribute to a worsening climate crisis.

Direct threats posed by climate change include natural disasters, displaced populations, a wider spread of existing infectious diseases, and increased risk of new infectious diseases. If, as a result of economic pressure posed by COVID-19, governments reverse their already minimal climate action efforts, the threats posed by climate change could devastate populations grappling with weakened health and social systems. This pandemic should make the need for climate action more, not less, urgent.

As a zoonotic[100] coronavirus, COVID-19 has demonstrated the inextricable link between environmental and human health. A particularly relevant approach to managing Zoonoses is One Health, which allows for "designing and implementing programs, policies, legislation, and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes."[101] Without increased investment in One Health approaches to identify future epidemic threats, climate change will continue to heighten the risk of potentially more deadly diseases. As the country works towards resetting its various systems, an opportunity is available to take more radical and effective measures against climate change. The way forward should be about enhancing resilience so that the reactionary measures deployed in the COVID-19 pandemic will not be necessary for the next crisis. This is the time to embrace elements of a 'Green New Deal'[102] and rethink Canada's place in energy, natural resources, and environmental stewardship for better population health.

Embedding environmental stewardship and health security throughout the policies implemented following COVID-19 would not only help achieve targets under SDG 13 (Climate Action), but also SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The pandemic has made it clear that diseases and environmental disasters do not respect borders. It has also highlighted the relevance of planetary health, which refers to both human health and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.[103] Canada can serve as a global leader in protecting planetary health and strengthening global institutions tasked with this mission.

*Source: Erik Mclean https://unsplash.com/photos/Ma_yQtF2aTg*


TARGET 3·3
FIGHT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
TARGET 7·2
INCREASE GLOBAL PERCENTAGE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
TARGET 13·3
BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY TO MEET CLIMATE CHANGE
TARGET 13·A
UNFCCC
IMPLEMENT THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
TARGET 13·B
PROMOTE MECHANISMS TO RAISE CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT
TARGET 14·2
PROTECT AND RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS
TARGET 15·1
CONSERVE AND RESTORE TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS
TARGET 17·14
ENHANCE POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
TARGET 17·16
ENHANCE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The 'leave no one behind' pledge has been included in many statements related to the impact of COVID-19 and response measures to the pandemic: "It is in times of such global insecurities that the most vulnerable can be left out-of-sight, out-of-mind. As many UN officials now signal, it is important to leave no-one behind and make the COVID-19 pandemic response one founded on global solidarity. This is necessary because ultimately, the coronavirus knows no borders or nationalities, only viral hosts."[104] Many of the challenges articulated in this chapter are disproportionately experienced by groups that have historically and systematically been marginalized or excluded from economic and social policies.

The UN provided a detailed analysis of the first- and second-order effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Sustainable Development Goals, which highlighted the impact it will have on women and "vulnerable segments of society and families."[105] This report prescribed the following actions to ensure that no one is left behind: provide fiscal stimulus and targeted support for the most vulnerable, including women; protect human rights and promote inclusion in response and recovery efforts by considering the intersection of age, gender, disability, and migratory status; provide support to small and mid-size enterprises; support social justice and decent work in the economic recovery phase; support education and ensure that it meets the needs of

*Source: @ms88 https://unsplash.com/photos/OlvAnZqg4Rw*

"vulnerable and marginalized children and youth" and is guided by the principles of inclusion and equity; foster social cohesion through free access to educational and cultural resources.[106]

The UN has also issued reports and policy briefs related to women's protection, equality, and empowerment during COVID-19. The World Health Organization assembled a document outlining disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak.[107] The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has assembled a platform for disability-inclusive responses to the COVID-19 crisis, including a policy brief with recommendations related to the mainstreaming of disability inclusion into pandemic responses.[108]

Targeted support by the Canadian government to vulnerable groups has been discussed across previous sections of this chapter. These funds are essential; however, it is also necessary to look across policies to ensure inclusion, participation, and agency for all who live in Canada. Furthermore, an asset-based approach to vulnerable groups could revitalize Canada's response efforts and offer creative solutions to short- and long-term challenges. For example, immigrant doctors who cannot practice because of Canadian licensing issues could be an asset in responding to COVID-19, especially given that some of these doctors have previously worked with outbreaks such as Ebola.[109]

# CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has affected various aspects of Canadian life. In this chapter, we discussed challenges related to health, economic hardship, food security, gender and intersectionality, education, law enforcement, and the environment. We outlined key aspects of governmental response to these challenges and highlighted what is still needed for the way forward. As the immediate urgency of pandemic response dissipates, different levels of government must work across sectors to ensure coordination and cohesion across policies implemented during and after the pandemic. The OECD's Framework for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development[110] can be used as a tool to facilitate whole-of-government approaches, alignment with SDG targets, and coordination across government, civil society, and special interest groups dedicated to leaving no one behind. While reactionary policies and measures have been crucial in effectively responding to the pandemic, there is room for optimization by eliminating unintended negative consequences, implementing localized equity-oriented adaptations, embedding environmental stewardship strategies across sectors, and strengthening our collective resilience to overcome future challenges.

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19

- Businesses receiving bailouts should be required, over the next few years, to implement more equity-oriented employment practices, including flexible employment options and gender-responsive benefits, more protective environmental measures, and contributions to community restoration funds in the long-term. The collaboration of the private sector is necessary to achieve the SDGs. Those receiving bailouts have a stake and a responsibility in sustainable development and strengthening resilience.
- Alternative food sources – resilient to systemic shock and supply chain failures—should be available across Canadian communities. Support to small-scale producers, processors, and retailers, and funds for innovation in this sector can have a protective effect in the long run. To ensure equitable access, additional outreach, and training opportunities for communities lacking local food sources are encouraged (e.g., in permaculture, hydroponics, etc.).
- In line with the government's feminist approach to policymaking, an intersectional and gender-responsive lens should be applied across policies implemented in response to COVID-19.
- In the long-term, school curricula should be reflected upon and adjusted to prioritize the development of competencies in systems thinking, care-based approaches, and artistic expression to create more resilient and caring problem-solvers.
- More flexible employment and income options for at-risk populations are needed to address housing insecurity as a threat to health security for all.
- Robust, equity-oriented legal instruments should be made available to prevent rapid gentrification, predatory commercial and residential leasing practices, and land-use practices that lead to environmental degradation and loss of open community space.
- Public awareness and community mobilization to prevent racism and violence against Asian minorities must be rolled out across the country and legally enforced. Additional mental health support should be provided to those affected.
- Criminalization of noncompliance with public health measures must be avoided to prevent the usual pitfalls of discriminatory profiling (racial, socioeconomic, etc.).
- The climate crisis remains an imminent threat; failure to integrate environmental stewardship and radical climate action in policies implemented in response to COVID-19 can have devastating effects in the medium to long term. The OECD's Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development framework should be applied to ensure that interlinked SDG targets are appropriately addressed across COVID-19 response measures and policies.

# ENDNOTES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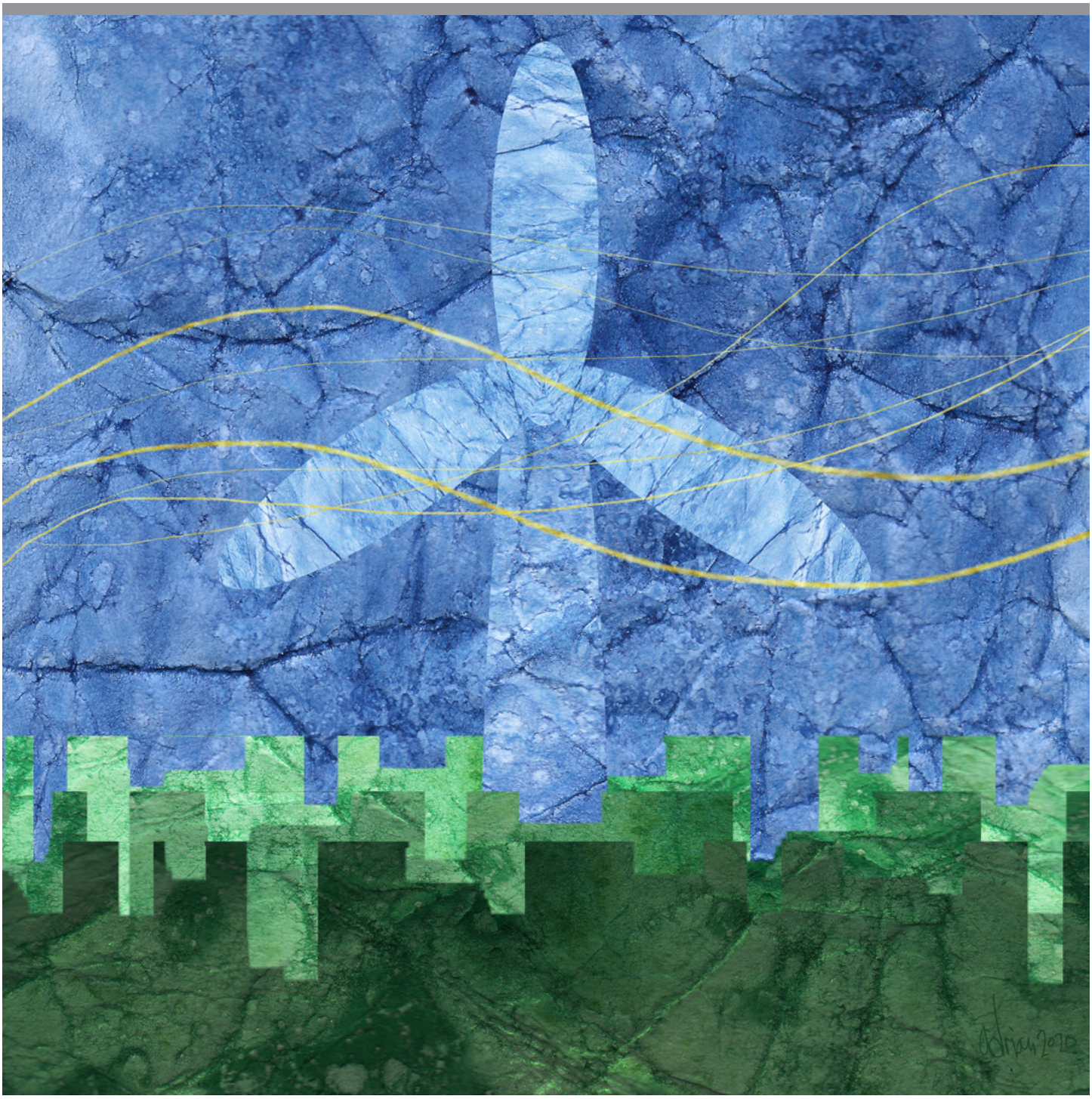

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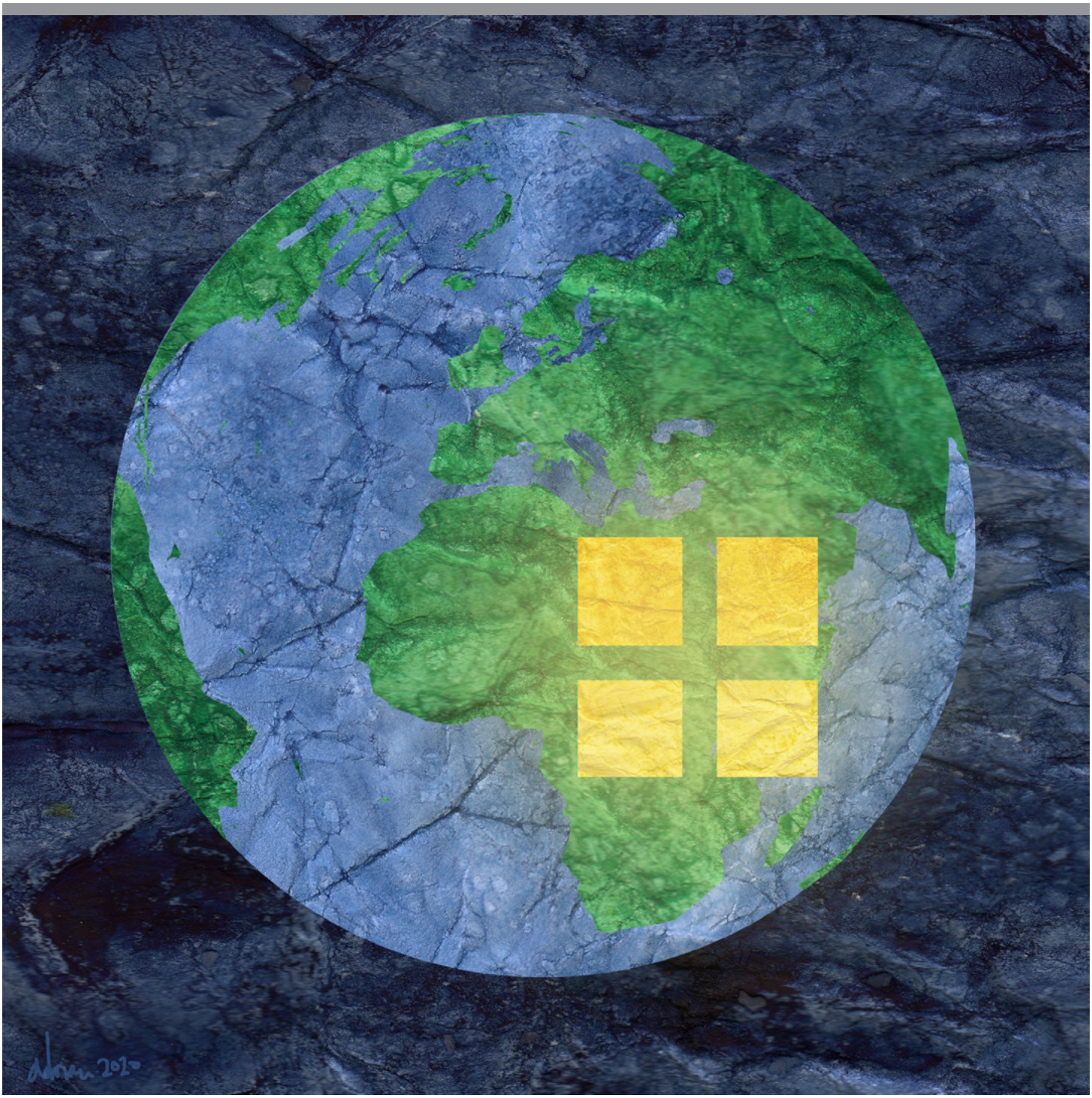
# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Dr. Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber** is a Senior Policy Analyst & Gender Specialist at BCCIC. She has a doctorate in International Development Studies from the University of Oxford. Zosa has accrued 15 years of experience in research, evaluation, and policy analysis in South East Europe, Central Asia, West Africa, and Southern Africa. Her work has centred on human rights, empowerment, and social justice in the context of child protection, forced migration, gender empowerment, and women's equality. Zosa has published numerous reports, academic articles, and book chapters. Her recent book entitled *Exile Identity, Agency and Belonging in South Africa: The Masupatsela Generation*, published by Palgrave-MacMillan, focuses on the experiences, identity, and agency of second-generation refugees in exile.

**Kyle Fawkes** is a marine affairs researcher from Vancouver Island, BC. He holds an interdisciplinary Bachelors of Arts and Science from Quest University Canada as well as a M.Sc. in Coastal and Marine Management from University College Cork, Ireland. Kyle has a passion for investigating inclusive mechanisms of ocean governance and has extensive experience researching the United Nations Regular Process and its World Ocean Assessments. Kyle has worked as a research assistant in Malawi, Ireland, and Canada on topics related to food security, coastal management, and ecological marine modelling. He is currently a research affiliate with the Future Earth Coasts network, where he helps to evaluate the impacts of global environmental assessments on efforts to advance the 2030 sustainable development agenda. In his free time, Kyle enjoys paddle boarding, surfing and trail running.

**Dr. Sameera Hussain** is a Senior Policy Advisor at the Canadian Society for International Health. She holds a doctorate in global health policy from the University of Queensland. She has 10 years of experience in health systems research and policy analysis focused on international social contracts rooted in human rights, and specifically the Sustainable Development Goals. She has published numerous academic blogs, articles, and reports, and is on the Editorial Board of Globalization and Health Journal. Sameera is a mobilizer of policy and partnerships focused on intersectoral, whole-of-society approaches to public health and has contributed to the 2020-2030 strategic plans of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the International Development Research Centre.

**Dena Javadi** is a health systems researcher with experience in the design, evaluation, and scale-up of health-sensitive interventions. She is interested in the role of education and urban design on health outcomes. She holds an MSPH from Johns Hopkins University and has been working with the World Health Organization for the past several years on managing intersectoral collaboration, primary care reform, adult learning, and evidence-informed decision-making. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Population Health Sciences at Harvard University.

**Kyra Loat**, born and raised in Vancouver, has recently graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. With an interest in international law and policy, Kyra hopes to continue her studies by attending law school in the future. Her passions include sustainable development, gender equality, and social justice, with a special interest in the connections between gender equality, education, and climate change. In her free time, Kyra enjoys practicing yoga, spending time with her family and friends, and cooking/eating! As a self-proclaimed optimist, Kyra hopes to use her positive attitude and infectious energy to continue to connect with others and inspire change in and out of her community.

**Emma Ramsden** is a graduate student studying ancient gender, culture, religion, and ethnicity in the Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia. With a background in archaeology, Emma's interests lie in understanding how different axes of identity marginalized or elevated an individual's status in antiquity, and furthermore, how these axes are visible in material and literary evidence. Emma's current work focuses on constructions of gender in an ancient set of rites and how these gender identities were weaponized to help marginalize a form of religious worship.

**Carly Rimell** is a land use planner at the District of North Saanich. Her passion lies in environmental protection, agriculture and food systems, climate change resiliency, and social planning. She believes that planning processes should be innovative, inclusive, and accessible. She is particularly interested in the connections and scalability of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through policy, practice, and partnerships. Carly completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria in geography and environmental studies and recently completed a graduate certificate in sustainable community development from Royal Roads University.

**Nora Sahatciu** is a development practitioner and a philanthropist who has worked in sustainable development in many countries including Canada, Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro. Most of her work has been dedicated to social inclusion, human rights, and gender equality. Living through a war in Kosovo in 1999, Nora explored ways to help people, and to mediate conflicts with communities in diverse contexts. She later moved with her family to Canada. In recent years, Nora served as the Head of the UN Coordination Team in the UN Kosovo Team and also worked with various UN organizations including UNDP, UNOPS, and UN Country Teams in Kosovo and Montenegro. She earned a degree in Engineering and Architecture from the University of Prishtina in Kosovo, and holds a Masters Degree in Economics of Culture: Policy, Governance and Management from the Faculty of Economics, University of Rome ("Tor Vergata") and a Specialization in Gender and Sexuality studies from Dartmouth College.

**Kyu San Shim** is a 4th-year student, who uses he/his/him pronouns, specializing in political science and international relations at the University of British Columbia. He was born in California, USA, and is of Japanese and Korean descent, but grew up in Beijing, China. His internship experiences in China and the United States led to his recognition of the importance of the sustainable development goals. The internships, which were designed to improve the quality of life of individuals in both local and global settings with a focus on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), cemented his current passion to make a difference. Outside his studies, he enjoys cooking, reading, basketball, and discovering new music!

**Mike Simpson** is the Executive Director of the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC). Prior to working for BCCIC, Mike was the Executive Director of One Sky – The Canadian Institute for Sustainable Living. His work varied, from leading major bilateral projects in West Africa, including Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to working in Latin America on projects ranging from forest conservation to leadership development. Prior to One Sky, Mike ran an award-winning documentary film company for 15 years, where he helped to create films that focused on human rights, social justice, and protecting the environment. Mike has been an active voice for Canadian civil society at international forums ranging from the World Summit on Sustainable Development to UN meetings on renewable energy, climate change, and the SDGs. With a keen interest in Integral Theory, he enjoys actively exploring the nexus between developmental psychology and social change.

**Keila Stark** is an interdisciplinary researcher with a background in marine ecology, international environmental diplomacy, and social equity in biodiversity conservation. She was a contributing author to BCCIC's Where Canada Stands Volumes II and III, and represented the BCCIC's work at the High-Level Political Forum on the 2030 Agenda and meetings of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Her recent work with the University of Queensland's Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science focused on understanding how incorporating social equity into conservation interventions can contribute to human well-being in lower-income countries. She is currently a Ph.D. student in the Biodiversity Research Centre at the University of British Columbia.

**Laurel Wayne-Nixon** moved to Norway in 2017 to do her Master's Degree in International Environmental Studies. Prior to moving abroad, Laurel lived in Victoria and obtained a B.A. in Political Science and Environmental Studies from the University of Victoria. Laurel started working on the Good Practice in 2030 Agenda Implementation Series during her internship at BCCIC and became fully immersed in the 2030 Agenda. She sees a powerful opportunity in the SDGs and is particularly excited about the localization of the 2030 Agenda. During her time with BCCIC Laurel has authored more than five policy briefs on SDG Implementation in Canada and helped lead a delegation of over 20 youth to the UN during the 2019 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). During the HLPF 2019 she organized a side event on Agenda 2030 and Intergenerational Equity with the Canadian government and spoke on a panel about Canada's progress on SDG 16 at the South Korean consulate.

**Tanya Wragg-Morris** is a Research Analyst at Capilano University and an independent development consultant, working at the nexus of social, environmental, and economic policy. Recent work has focused on gender mainstreaming across various sectors: energy, agriculture, and climate change. Tanya has acquired past experience as Research Analyst with the London School of Economics Public Policy Group, UNDP/International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, and as a Senior Analyst for the IFC/World Bank. She is a graduate of Queen's University (BAH) in Economics and Geography and the London School of Economics (M.Sc.) in Public Policy and Philosophy.

*The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) is a coalition of over 140 individuals and civil society organizations that has engaged in sustainable development and environmental issues for 30 years.*

BCCIC supports its members in becoming more effective agents of change in their sustainable development efforts by disseminating knowledge gained through collaborative projects, building relationships across sectors and networks, and developing the capacity of sustainable development practitioners. BCCIC also represents members' interests and advances civil society policy recommendations on municipal, provincial, national, and international issues.

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